

DC Gazette

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NOVEMBER 1981

Whole Number 214

The concept of a limited,
winnable nuclear war was
conclusively disproven
when...

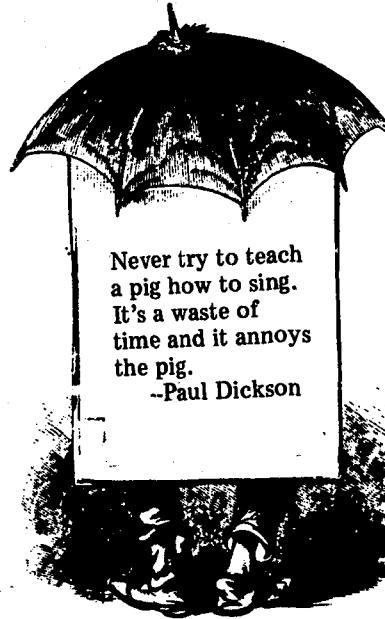


**JUSTICE: BETTER
NOT TOUGHER**

•
The Loneliest Mile in Town

•

Weather



Report

A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS, even those who do not personally believe in abortion, feel the procedure should not be outlawed. This is according to an AP-NBC poll last month. Forty-four percent of those polled said they believed that abortion was not wrong; 49 percent said it was and seven percent were not sure. Among those who said they believe abortion was wrong, however, two out of five respondents still said they didn't believe the procedure should be illegal.

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS begun a campaign to create a marketing code for drugs, similar to this year's regulation of baby formula -- which drew bitter opposition from the United States. The World Health Organization is accusing American drug companies of using their foreign subsidiaries to sell drugs banned in the United States, and trying to destroy home-owned drug companies in the third world.

DEFENSE ELECTRONICS MAGAZINE reports that the Reagan administration is considering a sneaky plan to return more than 100,000 Cuban refugees -- criminals, mental patients and homosexuals, who are classified as "undesirable." The alleged plan is to move the refugees to the American naval base at Guantanamo and then turn the base over to the Cuban government. The Navy has leased the base since 1906, but Castro has made it clear for two decades that he wants the US out. The Pentagon now says Guantanamo has no special strategic value.

A UNIVERSITY OF California scientist says "second stage" smog alerts, which occur about nine times each July and August, are almost sure to happen during the 1984

The alternative press, which has played such a major role in shaping the political and social changes that have occurred over the past two decades, has received surprisingly scant treatment by the book publishing world. Our own bookshelf stops with Lawrence Leamer's "The Paper Revolutionaries," published in 1972. Now, we are happy to report, David Armstrong, who writes "American Journal" for these pages, has written a thorough and fascinating history of alternative journalism. Called "A Trumpet to Arms," (J. P. Tarcher, pub., Houghton Mifflin, dist. \$14.95), David's book is a necessity for anyone wishing to understand not only the alternative press, but the history of social and political change in the sixties and seventies. As a former editor of the Berkeley Barb, Armstrong writes from a base of personal knowledge, and expands on this with excellent research, detail and breadth.

Olympic games. To determine how pollution would affect the games, Dr. William Adams simulated the effects of a severe LA smog on runners, soccer players, cyclists and other long distance athletes. All the athletes performed below their capacity and some were unable to complete their events at all. Olympic officials could avoid the risk and embarrassment of smog-plagued games, Adams says, if they scheduled events on Sundays or in the mornings, when auto pollution levels are lowest. But

Olympic officials claim the requirements of TV networks are too demanding to let smog dictate schedules.

ACCORDING TO Chemical & Engineering News, if you want to recreate Toronto's acid rain content, just stand in a stream of tomato juice. But real acid freaks should head for Wheeling, West Virginia, where residents are subject to rain equivalent to a mixture of lemon juice and battery acid.



Apple Pie

THE CALIFORNIA YOUTH authority has announced it's bugging the chapels in four correctional facilities for young people. Members of the clergy have complained bitterly but Art German of the Youth Authority says it's not a religious issue, it's just that a lot of prisoners gather in the chapels, and there's no telling when a disturbance will break out.

THE TOWN OF LINDSAY, Ontario, is looking for a town fool. The one-year position is part of the city's celebration of its 125th anniversary. The municipal government says applicants must be proficient in gymnastics, juggling, song and humor -- and must be able to take the job seriously.

BOB STERN of Maryland Heights, Missouri, has launched a one-man campaign to send plates to the White House -- paper plates. Stern says that in these times it's an affront for the first family to eat off china costing a thousand dollars a place setting,

so he is urging people to take a paper plate, write "heard you needed dishes" on it, affix a stamp and mail it to the White House.

A CALIFORNIA FEMINIST ORGANIZATION has invited a group whose slogan is "suffering not suffrage" to appear in the annual Doo Dah Parade in Pasadena next month. Ladies Against Women will be the guests of the Long Beach chapter of NOW in the Doo Dah Parade, organized several years ago as an alternative to the Rose Parade. LAW is actually the creation of a Berkeley comedy-theater group, and claims to consist of women who work toward such goals as "restoring virginity as a high school graduation requirement." An organizer warns all prospective LAW marchers that before they can take part they must get their husbands' permission.

AN AMERICAN POLICE ADVISOR suggested to British officials that one way to quiet an angry mob would be to use a spray made from powdered banana skins mixed with water. The first test didn't work out too well. The volunteer "rioters" found themselves rooted to the spot in a sea of yellow goo.

ON A TRIP to Africa, Belgian businessman Andre Sabbe found himself hospitalized in a refugee camp. He was so struck by the suffering of the orphans he saw in Somalia that he decided to adopt them -- all of them. Somalia was happy to oblige -- they even promised to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize, but the Belgian government wasn't so happy, especially after Abbe applied for 40 million dollars a year in welfare payments.

NUCLEAR warfare has wiped out an important Royal Air Force tradition: the handlebar moustache. British officers are bristling with indignation at orders to trim their facial hards. But the brass says that the moustaches interferes with special gas masks designed for nuclear attacks.

★★★ JELLYBEAN REVUE!! ★★

Last 38 months!!!

• The Environmental Protection Agency has sent only fifty cases to the Justice Department for violation of environmental laws during the first nine months of the year. In 1980, EPA referred 230 cases and in 1979, 200. Said Jeffrey Miller, who was with EPA's enforcement branch under Carter, "If you can't find 100 cases a year worth prosecuting, you must be blind."

• The administration is considering that thousands of federal officials be required to take lie detector tests prior to getting access to classified materials.

• The administration lifted a ban, imposed in 1977, on the reprocessing of spent utility fuel. President Carter had banned such reprocessing based on the fear that plutonium extracted in this process could be used for additional nuclear weapons.

• The Secretary of the Air Force heard about the president's plan to place MX missiles in fixed silos ten minutes after the press had been informed.

• A federal judge ruled that the government's chief personnel office had improperly eliminated abortion coverage from all federal health care plans except in cases where a woman's life was endangered.

• The administration plans to revive a plan for a radio grid in upper Michigan and Wisconsin that would be used to send messages to submarines. The plan, on a larger scale, had been scrapped in 1973 by the Nixon administration after environmental groups protested that the powerful beams would harm people, electrocute earthworms, cause miscarriages in cows and ruin tv reception.

• The administration submitted to Congress a plan to restrict use of the Freedom of Information Act and allow the Attorney General to keep secret selected information. The measure would also exempt from the act information that would "tend to" disclose the identity of a confidential source of information and all information provided by such source. Said Jack Laundau of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, "These are not minor modifications or fine-tuning of the act; these are a frontal assault on the act."

• Asked by congressmembers what the "average citizen" might think about Reagan's former promises not to cut the "social safety net," OMB director David Stockman replied, "I would advise the average citizen not to take [such statements] as literally and as mechanically as you are in your questions." Stockman also told the legislators, "You can shut down Amtrak except in the northeast part of the country without any great loss. We're going to have to do it in a year or two anyway."

Tofu builds strong budgets 12 ways

BODY BEAT

A STUDY OF MICE indicates that hard-driving male executives should be extra careful about their health. Scientists at the University of Akron have found that when male mice are put together in a colony, one of those males emerges as the dominant leader. Researcher Dan Ely adds that within a month's time, this dominant mouse begins to show serious elevations in his blood pressure and the early symptoms of heart disease. Ely says, however, that when the dominant one is removed from the

colony, his blood pressure drops to normal rather quickly.

Then the number two mouse becomes the leader and his blood pressure begins to rise.

The researchers have found a way to prevent all this in mice, but the solution probably do not have application to humans: they report that by castrating dominant male mice, the neutered rodents no longer show any interest in dominating the colony; and their levels of hypertension drop dramatically.

THE USE OF POTENT forms of cocaine is said to be sending more and more Americans to hospital emergency rooms, and even to the morgue. The New York Times reports that drug officials across the country are warning that cocaine has become, in recent months, the fastest-growing source of serious drug-related medical problems in the US.

What is causing the problem is not simple snorting but an increase in the number of people injecting the powder or smoking highly concentrated and chemically altered forms, known as "freebase."

Says one doctor, "It's like putting your finger in an electric socket. It blasts you out." The number of cocaine-related emergencies and deaths has increased in some cities by more than 100 percent in just the past year.

AUSTRALIAN researcher Roger Walsh says that menstrual cycles do not affect a woman's intellectual performance. Walsh and two colleagues studied 244 students at the University of Queensland to see whether women's periods affected their examination scores on medical and paramedical courses. They found that overall, women who took the exams during their periods, even when

they were suffering from cramps or other menstrual difficulties, did no worse than other students.

BRITISH SLEEP RESEARCHER Dr. James Horne warns that people who take sleeping pills are kidding themselves: even the best put you to sleep only 15 minutes earlier than you would fall asleep naturally. Further, the drugs remain in your system long past the time you wake up, so users are more sleepy during the day than if they'd skipped the drugs altogether.

LINCOLN POLISSAR of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle says that his study finds that women living a long busy highways have twice the cancer rates of those in quieter neighborhoods. For reasons that can not yet be explained, the cancer rates for men seemed unaffected by the flow of traffic. Polissar stressed that his findings are preliminary and must be regarded as "inconclusive." But a similar 12-year study in Switzerland found a ninefold cancer increase for residents living along busy thoroughfares.

NURSE MIDWIVES, backed up by doctors, deliver babies which are just as healthy those delivered by physicians. That's the finding of an unusual four-year study by Rosemary Mann, the head of the Alternative Birth Center at San Francisco General Hospital. The study, published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, found no significant differences in the number of complications, mortality rates or birth weights among the first 1000 babies delivered in the program. The Alternative Birth Center was set up to offer a more homelike atmosphere, to try to accommodate entire families rather than just the expectant mothers.

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JUSTICE: BETTER, NOT TOUGHER

Seymour Wishman

In his recent address before the International Association of Chiefs of Police, President Reagan was quite right to point out that we should be concerned about the innocent victims of crime. Of course we should. And he was right again to point out that the public is outraged when a vicious criminal escapes punishment. Of course we are.

But the president's program for halting such abuses misdirects our outrage at solutions which, unfortunately, will not decrease the number of new victims.

In the first place, his program assumes—as many Americans do—that droves of felons slip through the criminal justice system without ever entering the process, and that the fault belongs to “liberal” judges, unscrupulous lawyers or ridiculous technical loopholes in the law. The fact of the matter is that a surprisingly high percentage of those who commit serious crimes do wind up behind bars, as America's overcrowded prisons attest. Moreover the real reason why some vicious criminals escape

punishment all too frequently lies with the incompetence—or even lawlessness—of cops, prosecutors or judges. Excessive liberalism in the system has little to do with its shortcomings.

Since becoming a criminal lawyer 16 years ago, I have prosecuted or defended hundreds of people accused of serious crimes. In the course of that work I have found a few truths plainly obvious in the matter of crime and punishment: Every time a defendant is acquitted because of an improperly taken confession or an illegal search, some cop either didn't know what he was doing or arrogantly assumed he could break the law himself. Every time a prosecutor discloses prejudicial information or gets caught concealing important information from a defense counsel, the prosecutor himself is responsible for handing the defendant the key to the jail house. Every time a trial judge favors the prosecutor during a trial, or gives the jury the wrong instructions at the end of one, it is the incompetence or bias of the judge that allows the criminal to escape punishment.

Through an incompetence or lack of integrity of their own, most journalists rarely point to the responsible characters when assigning blame for a miscarriage of justice. It is thanks, finally, to this

shortcoming—the media's longtime failure to inform the public of who actually is at fault—that the president now can propose a crime program which will not deter crime, even if it may lead people to believe that it might.

The reality is that most judges are not “soft” on criminals; they often are the most eager to punish the guilty. Rather than being brilliant, most criminal lawyers win their cases in spite of their own blunders. And the legal “technicality” that frustrates the efforts to put a monster in prison usually is a fundamental constitutional right which has been negligently or willfully violated.

A terrible murder case recently concluded in the

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Gas leaks may occur from faulty appliances, loose connections, service lines inside or outside your home, or from gas mains. Such leaks should be dealt with immediately by experts.

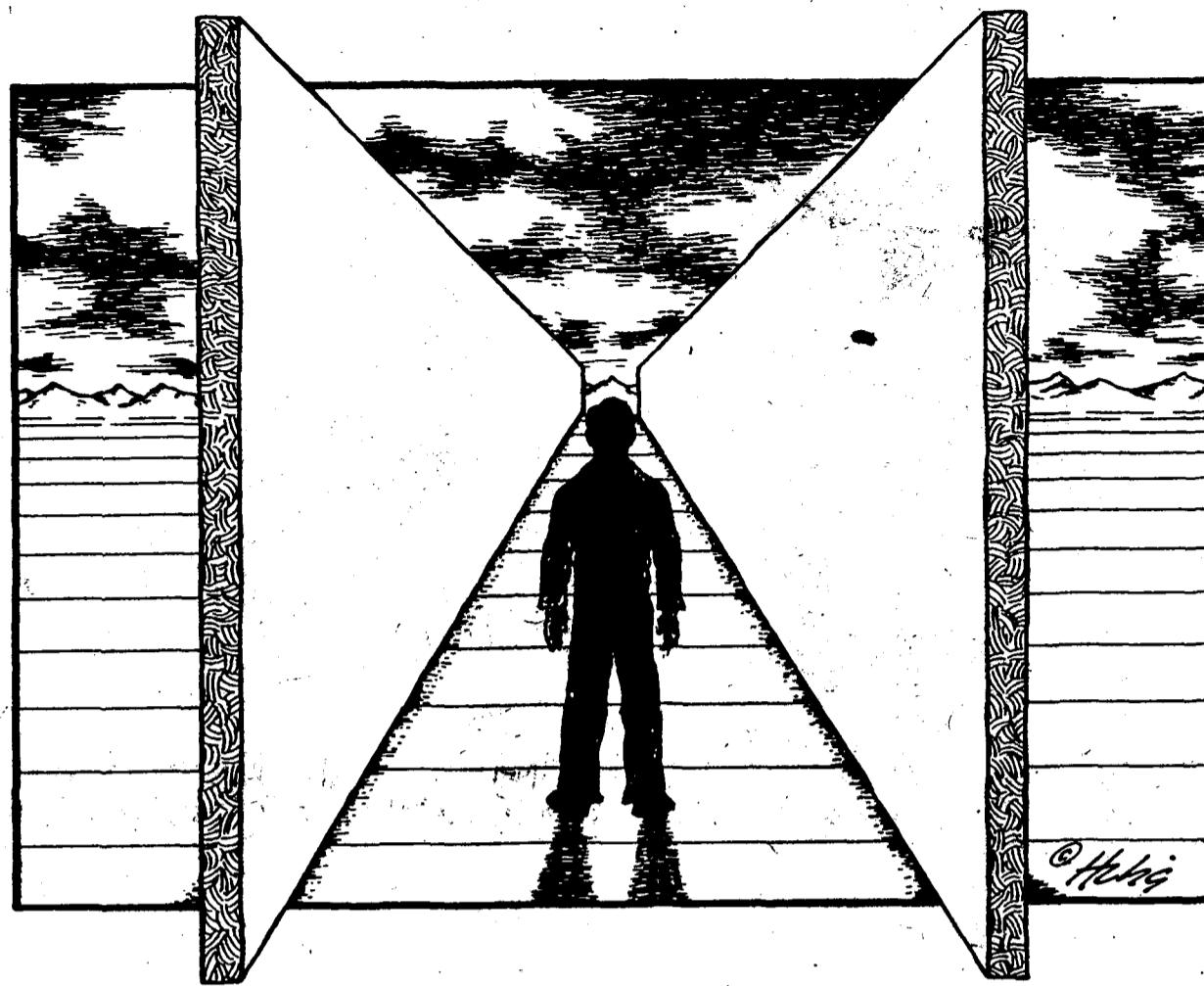
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Washington Gas



northeast demonstrates my point. In the summer of 1967, Plainfield, N.J., exploded in a race riot. As in many other cities on fire at the time, one of the primary causes of Plainfield's explosion was pent-up hostility between the black community and the police. While trying to contain the riot within the black neighborhood, one of Plainfield's patrolmen was brutally beaten to death by a group of 20 to 40 blacks.

Yet a massive investigation and lengthy trial led to the conviction of only two people. And even that verdict was reversed because the trial judge had in-

structed the jury that conviction could be based on a conspiracy theory—a theory that never had been charged, proved or defended in the case. In a second trial, George Merritt, one of the two defendants, was convicted after the prosecutor had introduced the damaging written statement of a person who had not testified and therefore could not be cross-examined by the defendant. A third conviction of Merritt was reversed because a police officer's report was suddenly discovered which showed that the only eyewitness to testify against Merritt in his re-trial had, at least in part, been

lying. The newly discovered report had been written just days after the murder, and never was disclosed to the defense counsel over the next 12 years.

The point is not that Merritt was necessarily innocent; he may well have participated in the murder. But after three trials and 10 years in prison he still had not been properly convicted by the state. The state failed each time because of a different law enforcement officer's incompetence.

Nonetheless, Merritt's first two reversals were ascribed by the media to mere technicalities. The judge's incompetence in the initial trial provoked no story on why, or how often, judges blow convictions because they don't know what they're doing. The prosecutor's overreaching in the second trial led to no investigation into the quality of legal representation the state was getting in its fight against crime. Lastly, when the cop's report on the unreliable eyewitness surfaced, journalists did not investigate how such reports could have been "lost" for so long, whether there had been a cover-up or how often similar mistakes by police sabotage convictions.

Journalists have not even examined how such cops, prosecutors or judges manage to get and keep their jobs. And President Reagan doesn't seem to have any interest in these kinds of questions, either.

Any successful new crime program has to start with a basic understanding of the criminal justice system's present failure: Today that system lacks an effective mechanism for preventing incompetents from finding their way into the legal process, accumulating important responsibilities, and surviving in spite of the injustices they perpetrate. Cops virtually never are disciplined for conducting illegal searches or extracting coerced confessions. Prosecutors who lose cases because they do not know the law or deliberately violate it usually must account to no one. No statistics are kept regarding convictions which are regularly reversed because judges have misunderstood or misapplied the law.

It is clear that steps must be taken to attract more qualified people to the law enforcement profession. Some judges who now preside over criminal trials have themselves never tried a jury case as a lawyer. Prosecutors often are new lawyers, just out of school and still in the midst of training. Once they

LIFE & RELATED SUBJECTS **Dave Barry**

You men out there: If you want to make large sums of money and drive snappy roadsters and have women hurling themselves at you, you have to dress right. Too many of you are going around dressed like advertisements from 1956 Sears catalogs. You're not paying enough attention to the fashion signals emanating from New York.

That's what New York does: It emits fashion signals. And I'm not talking about just clothing fashions. Virtually every major cultural activity—drama, literature, drug addiction—takes its cues from New York. The only city that comes close to challenging New York for cultural leadership is Los Angeles, because it is blessed with an abundance of the raw materials necessary to produce first-rate television game shows: good weather and people with prune pits for brains.

But when it comes to clothing fashions, New York has always been the leader. Millions of years ago, when the prehistoric humans in the rest of North America were wearing filthy, insect-ridden bear skins, the prehistoric humans in New York were wearing filthy, insect-ridden deer skins. When prehistoric out-of-towners would come to New York, dressed in their bear skins, the New Yorkers would snicker at them and charge them twice the regular number of beads and shells to get into the popular caves.

So if you want to look right, you've got to keep your eye on New York. But you have to be careful: Sometimes New York tries to trick you. Not long ago, the fashion designers, in a playful mood, invented

the leisure suit, which is a two-piece outfit made from synthetic drapery fabric and designed so that it costs as much as a regular suit but has the dignity and aesthetic appeal of soiled pajamas. No New Yorker ever dreamed of wearing a leisure suit. Any New Yorker who had worn one would have been attacked on the streets. By the police. But the rest of the country bought leisure suits like madmen. For a time, you saw them everywhere: Millions and millions of men, responsible men with families and jobs, going to restaurants and other respectable public places looking like members of some huge polyester slumber party.

The best way to avoid being misled is to watch the fashion ads in your major men's magazines, such as *Playboy*, which also offers well-researched, hard-hitting, thought-provoking pictures of naked women. These ads generally feature male models with chiseled features, slicked-back hair and defiant, beady stares. Sometimes there's a female model who has not eaten in months standing in the background, looking longingly at the male model; you can tell that she really hankers after his clothes. Or she wants him to give her some food. But the male model never looks at her. He always stares beadily at the camera, as if to say: "You see how well I dress? You don't dress as well as I do. You don't dress well enough to clean my septic system."

Watch these ads, and you'll spot the trends. For example, several years ago I noticed an ad in which the male model had his jacket collar turned up. At first I thought this was a mistake, like, say, leaving your fly open. But before long all the models started showing up with

turned-up collars. This meant that the turned-up collar was either:

- Another leisure-suit type prank, dreamed up by a couple of fashion designers one day ("Hey Cyril: Let's see if we can get the jerks in Maryland and Indiana and places like that to turn up their jacket collars"), or
- A Major Trend.

Well, it turned out to be a legitimate Major Trend. I visited New York at the time, and I saw actual New Yorkers going around with turned-up collars. At first I thought they looked pretty stupid, but once I got used to it they began to look pretty stupid.

Before long, the rest of the country was turning up its collars. I imagine some of your real fashion-followers turned up the collars on their leisure suits. Of course, by the time the trend got around, New York was doing something else. I believe the next trend was the Preppie Look, in which you're supposed to go around looking like a private-school snot with a polo pony and a portfolio of debentures. I believe we're still on the Preppie Look, but you should check with *Playboy* to make sure. You have to be on your toes.

Things were a lot easier back in the days when men kept the same suits for generations and boys wore knickers. I think the decline of knickers is the single biggest cause of juvenile delinquency. If teenage boys had to wear knickers, you would not see them lounging around streetcorners dreaming up acts of vandalism. You would not see them at all. They would refuse to emerge from their rooms.

(Feature Associates)

National Action Guide

The Gazette's National Action Guide contains hundreds of activist organizations and alternative media. You can obtain this classic guide to where the action is by sending \$2 to the DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. NW, DC 20009.

have had enough experience to know what they are doing, they often leave for private practice—that, for instance, is what I did. Offering more money to those who want to prosecute or judge no doubt would help improve the quality of personnel. But once hired they also should be scrutinized in a systematic way to assure some quality control.

Too many notorious cases, like Merritt's, are simply mishandled. I believe that a terrible consequence of this official incompetence is misguided public pressure, now amplified by President Reagan, for tougher judges, for more restraints on defense lawyers, for narrower applications of constitutional rights.

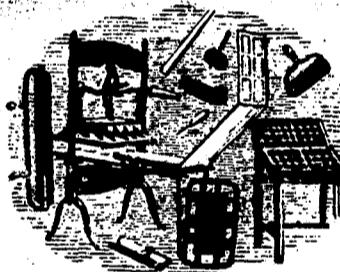
We don't need "tougher." We need "better."

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THE PRESS

Bob Alperin



Nader's Critical Mass Energy Project leaked a Nuclear Regulatory Commission study ranking the performance of atomic plants and nuclear construction projects. Two brief *Washington Post* paragraphs noted that NRC members wondered if ranking was worth the time and effort. A final paragraph said 21 of 72 reactors performed "below average". A lengthy *Miami Herald* story listed some problem areas that led to low ratings: radiation protection, emergency preparedness, fire safety, and plant security.

The *Herald* detailed deficiencies at a Florida plant. The *Post* could have reported on VEPCO's Surry 1 & 2 plants. Operations problems included: repeated failure to follow procedures or correct several recurring problems, difficulty responding to unexpected maintenance problems, and unapproved use of jumpers (people who jump in to soak up radioactive waste). Radiation protection weaknesses "were indicated by numerous... items of noncompliance and escalated enforcement action concerning inadequate radiological surveillance on a radioactive waste shipment." Quality assurance shortcomings included "uncorrected design problems in plant systems," use of "unqualified parts in safety-related maintenance," and failure to revise procedures after specifications revisions.

In a lengthy article (Sept. 21) *The New York Times* found that rust attacking steam generators might cause long shutdowns and costly repairs for 17 nuclear plants. Six days later it identified 13 plants endangered because the steel shell surrounding the uranium core was made brittle by radiation exposure. The same day it gave a good overview of these and other safety problems. Perhaps the *Post* will follow-up the local angles. Surry 1 & 2 had rust problems and Baltimore Gas and Electric's Calvert

Cliffs 1 & 2 had brittle steel. Richard Udell of Critical Mass cited a major failing of the *Times'* coverage: neglect of the dangers to repair workers.

Diablo Canyon reporting found the *Post* saying flaws from a "diagram mix-up" might delay the plant's fueling while the *Times* explained that the blueprints for two plants were inadvertently switched. The flaws were related to protection against earthquakes. The *Times* reported that the NRC inquiry had been expanded to a study of five safety systems.

A *Post* editorial was harsher on the "mindless school of nuclear protest"—those who objected to building a reactor near an active earthquake fault—than on the nuclear industry, which it urged "to try harder."

The UN Energy Conference focused on 14 non-conventional energy sources. On the basic issue—the creation and funding of an organization to direct development, the U.S. stood alone as the EEC countries, Scandinavia, and Canada sided with the developing countries. The U.S. argued that private enterprise can develop and market the neglected sources.

Sun, wind, water and wood were featured in "Renewable Energy," a 56-page *Boston Globe* supplement (Sept. 13). The emphasis was on aiding readers in determining if these energy sources were appropriate for their needs, what's available, and what it costs.

Give the *Post* credit for picking up a *Boston Globe* story on the oil lobby—but not full credit. They used far less than half of it. Missing: names of

the top ten fund recipients in both House and Senate, names of the 94 oil political action committees and the size of each's total contributions, details on oil's role in particular elections, and illustrative charts. Headline emphasis varied. *The Post*: "Oil emerges as leading Hill patron". *The Globe*: "How oil money helped to change the face of Congress."

It was the day's biggest story, taking 30% of the *Post*'s front page and all page two's news space. It sent to page 27 a story on a significant reversal of Justice Department civil rights policy. It was written by two reporters even as the *Post* was absent when Secretary Schweiker reported that U.S. planes had dumped Agent Orange on U.S. bases in Viet Nam. (The *Post* used the AP report.) "The" story was about Sugar Ray Leonard's visits to the White House and Capitol.

Play-by-play reporting of the corporate merger mania is often thorough. But where are the articles analyzing the political effects of concentrating in fewer hands so much control over money and people? Norman Miller's *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece feared that the development of "mega-corporations...is fraught with danger" to our political system.

The *Post* has its hidden-story trick. A two-line heavy print headline covers two columns. Contrary to our expectations, one of the stories is unrelated to the headline. In one case, a headline about Reagan administration plans to further cut military-related exports to the USSR was over a story about high growth rates in the poor countries.

CONFSSION TIME

John Merrow

Janet Cooke lied about her past in order to get a job with the *Washington Post*. She added a college degree to her *vita* and awarded herself enough extra grade points to make herself into an honors graduate. Of course the *Post* regrets not having made a few phone calls. (It was the colleges that blew the whistle on Cooke), and it seems safe to assume that anyone now being considered for a job there is being checked thoroughly.

But what about those *already* on the staff of our papers? How do we know they have not played fast and loose with the truth? Doesn't the public have a right to know for certain if Colman McCarthy really can run 26 miles, 385 yards and also play golf? Does JJ Kilpatrick really live in Hardscrabble, Virginia? (Is there really a place called Hardscrabble in Virginia?) And surely many *Post* readers have wondered all along whether George Will ever attended college.

It's time for us journalists to set the public's doubts to rest, to come clean now. And that's what I intend to do, because, like Janet Cooke, I lied to get a newspaper job; I too won a prize for reporting, was found out, and had to resign.

I've kept this covered up for nearly twenty years, but I knew deep in my heart that sooner or later, in the turmoil over Cooke's phony Pulitzer Prize, my sordid story would bubble to the surface. So, no more limited, modified hang-out cover-up for me. Let the truth be known; these are the facts:

I was twenty, on a voluntary one-year leave of absence from college. I'd headed west in search of "my identity." I knew I could find myself, once I caught on as a reporter for, say, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* or the *Globe-Democrat*. Unfortunately, ~~the Mr. Williams~~ ~~had~~ ~~not~~ ~~wanted~~ ~~to~~ ~~help~~ ~~me~~ ~~get~~ ~~another~~ ~~newspaper~~ ~~job~~ ~~but~~ ~~a~~ ~~college~~ ~~graduate~~ ~~might~~ ~~get~~ ~~a~~ ~~job~~. I cared to hire a kid who planned to return to college in a year, and so I headed further west. I stopped at every town with a newspaper, (lots of little weeklies out there) presented myself and my book of clippings to the editor... and got shown the door. Finally, after what I remember as about 20 rejections, a light bulb clicked on in my head: nobody would hire a college kid who would be heading home within months—but a college graduate might get a job.

By the time I got to the next place on the map I had my story worked out; I added two years to my life, became a college graduate (English major), and my roommates became Professors Barker and Wolland, my references. The dorm payphone became their office.

Salina, Kansas, was a sleepy, friendly city, home of the *Salina Journal*. Managing editor Glenn

Williams interviewed me, looked at my clips, asked for my references... and hired me on a "trial basis." After my elation wore off, I reminded myself of my promise: to reveal the truth right *after* my first big story, after I'd had a chance to show my stuff.

The first month went fast. I wrote about building Interstate 70... interesting, but no scoop. I put together a story about some guy who took houses apart board by board, and a column about how easterners eat their salads differently. Then, my big break: my short article about Santa (I think he arrived early, or maybe he lost his suit, or something) won the Central Kansas Short Feature Award for the Month! (five dollars, and a letter from somebody important). I was on my way!

That evening as I was leaving the *Journal*, my managing editor hailed me. My heart quickened, as I anticipated his praise, I'd like to say that we talked in his glass-walled office, but the *Journal* didn't look like anything from *All the President's Men*. Fact is, we were in the men's bathroom, and the M.E. was sitting on what is called, euphemistically, "the throne." It was an omen of things to come, unfortunately. He probably said something nice, but I only remember his next words: "I called those names you gave me, your English professors...." Long pause. "That phone turns out to be in a dormitory.... No professors there."

Well, Janet Cooke is made of tougher stuff than I, for sure. No two-day grilling for me. I couldn't get my confession out fast enough. "I was gonna tell you," I sobbed. The M.E. comforted me gently, then told me he'd help me get another job. I probably would have done better with a different manager.

In a way I was lucky. Word of my award had apparently not reached much beyond Central Kansas, or at least no Dartmouth College alumni office personnel had called the *Journal*. I was allowed to keep the five dollars. Mr. Williams helped me get another job, as reporter-photographer with the *Leavenworth Times*. And if I may say so, I soon proved to him that his faith was not misplaced when one of my photographs—of some abandoned cars covered with snow—won the *Eastern Kansas Feature Photograph Award* for the month of either January or February. Another five dollars, another letter from somebody important.

There, I feel better.

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John Merrow is producer and co-host of National Public Radio's "Options in Education" series.

In a story not used by the *Post*, the Associated Press reported what then seemed a significant shift in U.S. thinking about El Salvador. A "senior U.S. official," specifically citing Mexican President Lopez Portillo's initiative, said the U.S. welcomed efforts at mediation by any friendly Latin nation. Only a week earlier the U.S. had found the Mexican French call for negotiations not "helpful". The Lopez Portillo-Reagan Grand Rapids meeting seemed to narrow their differences. Salvadorean President Duarte's talk of elections received wide coverage. The *Miami Herald* obtained opposition leader Guillermo Ungo's reaction: the "electoral dialogue" was an attempt to split the opposition since only two parties in the coalition were invited to participate.

News of Duarte's September Washington visit was off-front page and mostly confined to brief interview reports. The *Post* contrasted his claim that the left was losing support with seemingly contradictory administration assessments, and placed his talk of movement toward democracy next to Mary McGrory's tough column on the stalled inquiry into the American nuns' murder. She reminded us that while Duarte told "Face the Nation" that circumstantial evidence couldn't convict in his

country, he had said in July there were eyewitness. But, as he said, if suspects were taken to a judge, "the judge might be threatened," seemingly an admission he can't control the death squads.

Reporters ignored the dead or dying land reform, a key issue for Salvadoreans. (This is not new. See *Gazette*, May 1981.) An exception was *The Dallas Morning News* which, among other details, cited credit figures from the agrarian reform director. Between March and June, 1980, \$48 million went to reforms. In the next year the government added \$80,000, while \$188 million went to the "unreformed" sector.

The *Post* often provides coverage of military personnel and equipment problems, but two F-15 fighter plane stories appeared elsewhere. The *Baltimore Sun* picked up the *Chicago Sun-Times* report that the planes deteriorate so that the actual speed is far less than the designed one (and no faster than the old F-5s now confined to pilot training.) Smoke, which could betray position to a foe, was another problem. A *Hartford Courant* reporter in West Germany found only 72% of the planes considered mission ready. A spare parts shortage is

solved partially by cannibalizing already-grounded planes.

The *Boston Globe* tracked the quiet return of the Pentagon to college campuses. By the end of fiscal year 1982 university share of military-related research and development funds will be up 42% from FY 1980. Fear of student protest against such contracts appears gone. Reporter Powers said the figures are given on the phone "readily, even cheerfully, to strangers" by the Pentagon and college contract offices.

By placing related stories together, or by cross-referencing them, editors enable readers to be certain they've read all there is on topics of interest. The *Post* continued on page six page one story on Treasury Secretary Regan's call for tighter lending policies to the third world. On page 15 was Haig's UN talk pledging aid to the Third World. They weren't cross-referenced. Another editing question is why not place related stories together? In a paper the size of the *Post*, would not some listing of contents also benefit readers?

One day after the above two foreign aid stories appeared, another was available, but not to *Post* readers. French Foreign Minister Cheysson's UN speech advocated policies quite different from the U.S.: billions to aid developing countries and treaties to protect the prices of their raw materials, to end "speculation and uncertainty."

The *Post* was outstanding on Reagan's preparations for his October 1 press conference and on the reporters' performance at it. The *Post* revealed Reagan's "safety valve"—seated on the right were journalists expected to ask "less pointed" questions. (It named the news organizations represented.) The strategy foiled efforts to learn if he sought military superiority over the Soviets and if persisting high interest rates disappointed him. The story noted reporters' neglect of follow-up questions.

How measured does the President believe a nuclear war can be won? The formula reply is that the Soviets think so. But, what do our officials think, and what is the evidence that the Soviets believe as claimed? In the fifties, some conservative political scientists were alarmed by the Soviet view that nuclear war was no longer "fatalistically inevitable." This could mean people could act to prevent it, but it was interpreted to mean they thought such a war could be won and were telling communists everywhere to be ready for their attack.

"Extremists Blamed for Sadat Killing"—Post headline. Had moderates been suspected? Another headline: "Former Prime Minister Assails Thatcher's Economic Policies". The point was that the "former" was a Tory, Edward Heath.

Paragraph two of a page one story told *Post* readers that congressional conferees had given "virtually automatic" pay increases to Congress in the future. The story never told how, but the *Baltimore Sun* did. It was tied to presidential recommendations on the pay of federal white collar workers and would go through unless Congress voted down the whole package. The *Post*'s account of the House's extension of the voting rights act didn't tell the length of the extension (two years), and trailed the *Sun* in clarity and completeness in explaining the "bailout" provisions. Very roughly, an area covered by the law can "bail out" of its jurisdiction if it has a clean voting rights record (as defined by the law) for a decade before August, 1984.

The media publicize labor's fight to have regular access to TV in Poland, but ignored CBS Radio's break with tradition by refusing to air AFL-CIO President Kirkland's Labor Day broadcast. The *Arkansas Gazette* and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* played medium-length stories on it.

The *Post*'s Labor Day coverage vividly contrasted with the *Hartford Courant's*. (The latter was representative of many others.) Headlines set the tone. *Post*: "Labor Shuns Reagan on Day He Brings a Check to New York". *Courant*: "Thousands March In Defiant Labor Day Parade." The *Post* concentrated almost entirely on

Reagan's visit. It ignored labor speakers but reported Mayor Koch's scolding the marchers for not inviting Reagan. It spoke of the "disappointingly small crowd" of less than 100,000. Hartford readers read the remarks of labor leaders and friendly politicians not only in New York but at Labor Day rallies in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Jacksonville. They learned there was no official estimate of parade size but that its coordinator asserted 200,000 marched. (UPI said 150,000.)

A general criticism of *Post* reporting is that it views events too much from the perspective of Washington politics. But the PATCO strike spurred no far-ranging analyses of aviation politics. How are the manufacturers, air lines, and pilots affected by pending FAA decisions?

Near-miss stories are given scant detail or ignored by the *Post*. It does not report how many planes really fly and with what delay, how the strikers are living or what the AFL-CIO aid fund is doing, or how business people (the most frequent travelers) are affected by the expectation and experiences of delay. A TV reporter found airport monitors listing as cancelled flights an airline claimed were going. Does that happen often? *The New York Times* found extensive delays on takeoffs from Boston, Washington, and New York. (An hour was not rare at National.) By mid-October the AFL-CIO fund for controllers' families had \$400,000 with steel, auto, and communications unions giving \$100,000 each.

Reporting a House hearing on air safety, the *Post* seemed balanced when it used quotes from FAA critics but it omitted information backing a key PATCO claim. CBS carried the FAA admission that controller fatigue was the primary air safety concern, and that 70% had 48-hour weeks. (You'll recall that almost 90% retire for health reasons with a 40-hour week.)

The *Kansas City Star* played the irony angle when, an ex-controller, retired by high blood pressure and recovering from a heart attack, received an offer to return as a trainer even as his striker son was dismissed. The offered contract reveals part of the costs for training a new controller force. The six-month deal paid \$15.40 an hour for a 40-hour week, plus \$31 per diem and air coach fare to Oklahoma City. The FAA wanted 250 instructors by late October, a cost of \$5,414,500 plus air fare and costs of running the training facilities. And that ignores the question of quality of recruits and graduates and of training from a makeshift teaching staff. Rebuilding operations proceed without media attention to quality or cost. (See October's *Gazette* regarding earlier strike coverage.)

The history of transitions to modern industrial society is a record of great tensions and upheavals.

Accounts of early capitalism and recent socialism have similarities. The Saudi government knows all this, and seeks to introduce change while preserving many traditional values. Do the planners of such a vast social enterprise deserve being called conservative? Rather than endless talk of Islamic fundamentalists and new Irans, why not report the effects of modernization on people?

The *Post*'s Edward Cody argued that mutual misunderstandings made AWACS a major test of U.S. reliability and of its friendship for the royal family. He says Saudi leaders generally don't understand democracy's "give and take" and "to a certain degree" don't want to. The implication is that they should be bartering their sovereignty with senators for votes—an example of the western "bazaar mentality." Three days earlier Cody reported Crown Prince Fahd's praise of Reagan for trying to win the AWACS vote, and the Prince's observation that "we know Congress sometimes decides contrary to the President." Is Fahd really untutored in our ways?

Some congressional demands for written Saudi assurances on use and control of the planes may reflect, not ignorance, but understanding that no nation would make such agreements, administration assurances of oral deals notwithstanding.

But cultural blindness has been on display. Statements by Reagan, Haig, and Weinberger that the U.S. would not let Saudi Arabia or Egypt become Irans suggest the U.S. has the right and ability to decide who shall govern those lands. After Sadat's death, public statements that Reagan and Bush wouldn't attend the funeral because our intelligence agencies decided it was too risky raised the spectre of an insecure, unstable Egypt. Plausible excuses existed for their staying in Washington. Why not cite them? Topping all was Senator Jackson's suggestion that Begin should secretly assure Mubarak that Israeli troops would help if he faced any threat. All of these statements worked to undermine the image of independence from the U.S. that Saudi and Egyptian leaders need for credibility at home or abroad.

The AWACS debate illustrates the shortcoming of the "both sides" school of reporting. The Saudis want the weapons, Israel wants its own arms package as compensation. Who makes the case that adding billions more in weapons hurts the cause of peace? The debate and most media ignored the *Chicago Tribune*'s story that AWACS failed a key test. A radar-jamming plane using equipment designed from a Soviet textbook, blinded AWACS' radar while two F-106s flew within 150 feet of it without detection. A *Wall Street Journal* columnist said the planes were "mission ready" but 15% of the time in Fiscal 1979, and, with lower readiness standards, 54% of FY 1980. (Edward Teller's warning that inexpensive changes in Soviet defenses

could detect the Stealth bomber had no impact on that debate. See the *Gazette*, November, 1980.) Ignorance remains irrelevant. The Israelis are said to have been briefed on the plane's problems. Did the Saudis receive the same briefings? How do they know the planes do what's claimed?

The *Post*'s Sadat's biography noted that the Soviets were slow delivering weapons to Egypt and that the 15,000 or more Soviet military advisers restrained him from attacking Israel. Could the common picture of Soviet mischief-making have flaws?

The same article noted Sadat's arrest, charged with a part in an assassination. Two years later he was acquitted, the implication being he was innocent. But his autobiography details his roles in such plots and the lies by which he misled his interrogators. Accurate, yet misleading, journalism.

Skokie's back as a 2½ hour TV drama. Hopefully, its factual basis will surpass media coverage of the original conflict. Wire service reports were particularly prone to use "march" and "parade" to describe Nazi demands. An image evolved of Nazis in full-regalia marching through Skokie's Jewish neighborhoods, home of many Holocaust survivors. The Nazis asked far less: 30 minutes on a Sunday to walk in front of the village hall, uniformed and displaying the swastika. There would be "white free speech" signs but no speeches or literature. In *The Nazi/Skokie Conflict* David Hamlin, then ACLU Illinois Executive Director, wrote of media error. He said a *Sun-Times* reporter who had been on the story six months called him to ask if a Cleveland paper's story on Nazi plans was accurate. It was. Among papers I saw, the *Plain Dealer* alone had the points consistently right.

Skokie's restrictive laws obscured its unreported and very different first reaction. Village officials and rabbis agreed the best way to handle the situation was to explain to the Jewish community what the Nazis proposed, what the law was (a sure win for free speech), and what ought to be done—ignore them. But Holocaust survivors in each synagogue insisted the Nazis must be stopped from appearing, thus setting off the long legal battle that publicized both the Holocaust and the tiny Nazi group.

In the last issue, part of a sentence in Bob Alperin's column was dropped. Thus, in speaking of the Palestinian situation, he appeared to say, "Now how about some reporting beyond the endless freedom decision?" What he actually said was, "Now how about some reporting beyond the endless freedom-fight or terrorist debate, or the should-we-talk-to-them decision?" Our apologies.



The city

THE LONELIEST MILE IN TOWN

That the nation's capital is distant from heartland pulsecenters like Salt Lake City and Dubuque, is one of the sturdier cliches of American journalism. If that's so, then it seems even further from the Cannon House Office Building, where I work now, to the District Building, where I worked not too many years ago.

I've been here nine months now, and it still stuns me how far that mile is down Pennsylvania Avenue, how disconnected the Capitol is from the city in which it resides.

The matter is not, of course, academic. Congress still holds the District's leash, yet for all the rapport between them, the District might as well be governed by Tibet. (In some respects, Tibet would be better. For one, there wouldn't be a suburban delegation.)

I don't think the District can ever hope to loom large in the minds of most members of Congress. But I think it can do better than its doing. The first step is to appreciate what it is up against.

You are newly elected to Congress, or perhaps a young staff member. You come from a town where kids leave their ten-speeds unlocked outside the public library, where the hardware store lets you put your purchase "on the account," where a crime wave is teenagers stealing stop signs. A black family at the local Air Force base was your exposure to "minorities."

They warned you about the crime here. "Worse than the heat." They warned you about the rents. The landlords getting it legally, the muggers illegally. You are picturing a steamy urban jungle. You feel under seige.

When you arrive, the Hill's veteran casandras—whose information often seems circa 1955—need little prompting: "Capitol Hill is O.K. this side of Fifth Street but don't get too far over... Dupont Circle is getting better but stay close in. I'd take a cab at night... They've had a lot of trouble in Southwest. I'd stay away..."

You learn that all D.C. residential real estate is divided into two parts: "O.K." and "Not O.K."

Perhaps you decide to settle in a swath of D.C.'s "O.K." territory. Or perhaps you trundle your golf clubs and Buick off to Rockville. Either way, the District is not a political entity. It's a menace. Who picks up the trash? The Interior Department? Who cares? You just hope they don't break into your car at night. Small wonder the Police Department is Capitol Hill's favorite D.C. agency.

What comes after fear? Parking tickets.

I would wager that the first official contact between the D.C. government and a healthy proportion of Congress and staff, is a rude pink slip under the windshield wiper. Remember, we are talking about people who are accustomed to leaving their car unlocked in the driveway.

From here, the budding relationship moves onward into such promising territory as income taxes for staff, auto registration, water bills and, perhaps, property taxes. Parents are told that on top of the highest home prices this side of Hong Kong, they will have to put their kids into private school. Spouses and friends relate horror-tale dealings with licensing boards. The bank won't let you write a

check on your new account for nine days. Three straight days of busy signals at the assessor's office or at C&P Telephone are enough to inspire a passion for revenge in the most egalitarian legislator or staff.

Menace city is also hassle city.

For those who choose the suburbs, the District becomes essentially irrelevant. Anyone who hasn't figured out the logic of the District's transportation system simply hasn't looked at it from the standpoint of members of Congress seeking quick getaways with minimum exposure to the city. Metro-safe and underground—is at the back door. The foot of the Hill offers access to three special freeway ramps that zip congressional commuters on their way. Most obstructions, such as the District's reluctance to adopt right-on-red, are easily remedied through amendment to appropriation bills.

Perhaps the mayor and council chairman feel they shouldn't have to come up here and trot ponies. I can understand that. I can even admire it. But for the time being at least, this is where the game is. If you don't show up to play, then you shouldn't complain when you lose.

(As I write this, I find a letter in our box from the mayor regarding the federal payment. A hopeful sign.)

The District has one advantage that most lobbyists would kill for—a nonpolitical point of entry. It should use this advantage much more.

For example, it would not demean the mayor's office to prepare a special booklet for new congressmen and staff (for all newcomers, in fact) with information on taxes, parking regulations, recreational facilities, rent control, voting, consumer protection information, and other puzzling minutiae of life here. Such a booklet could contain, just incidentally, background information on the District and its relationship to Congress. A special liaison from the mayor's office could visit new congressional offices to answer questions and meet the staff person who will be handling D.C. matters.

This small investment alone could reap large dividends. Much more is possible.

As things stand, a new congressman's written introduction to DC comes not from the District Building, but from the Board of Trade, which distributes a Kodacolor promotional packet of the type you might receive at the opening of a new townhouse development off Rockville Pike. The virtues promoted, of course, are not those of D.C. but of the entire metropolitan area. Of the District and its relationship to Congress, there is precious little. But of Metro and suburban shopping wonderland, there is a great deal.

It would help the bridge-building if the council showed a little more political savvy in the timing of the measures it sends up here. The Sexual Assault Reform Act, as drafted, was not the ideal measure with which to establish a political base in the new Congress.

I am aware that the arguments made in defense of this bill are staggering in their righteousness. It contained provisions that were indisputably worthy. But by sending that measure to the Hill, the District was asking its potential allies to render themselves Kennel Ration for the political mad dogs of the right. True, the "It's not the time" routine echoes the refrain of the civil rights foot-draggers of the sixties. But there's a tendency up here to put the legalization of sodomy, adultery, and fornication down on a plane of moral urgency somewhat lower than was the case with the civil rights legislation of two decades ago.

The basic problem is that Congress votes on such local matters to begin with. But it does. Knowing that, the Council painted many of its friends into a corner in which they had to choose between the principle of home rule and what many of their constituents—with prompting from Jerry Falwell—might well have thought was the legalizing of de-

OUTLYING PRECINCTS

Jon Rowe

Daily life here enforces this sense of the District's irrelevance. Parking is underground. Restaurants, a mini-department store (exempt from D.C. taxes), barber shops and even post offices, service your daily needs. The mail crew and the cafeteria serving line provide your main contact with the people of the city. The District is where THEY live—the servant quarters.

Most people with business before the Congress take pains to make themselves known up here, especially when they start off in the hole the way the District does. There are the rituals of introduction: the letters to the newly-elected, packets of information, receptions, personal visits, a good word from selected constituents.

Such gestures don't pin down votes. But they do put you on the map. They connect an issue with a face. If nothing else, they make contact a little easier when the chips start to fall.

Considering that well over half the current members of the House were elected after Home Rule passed in 1974, and consequently tend to be tabula rasa where the District is concerned, a little constructive contact would be especially helpful.

Yet the District—both citizens and officials—does precious little. The mayor's office says it sent telegrams of congratulations to all newly-elected members. That may be. But I have yet to see anything that would help a new member understand the District's relationship to the Hill. Our office has yet to be visited by a representative of the mayor or council. If the District even has an official liaison person with the Hill (many cities now have full-fledged lobby offices here) that fact is yet to be communicated.

viant sexual acts. Surely there are better ways to build a base here.

Nothing reinforces the sense of distance between the District Building and the Capitol like the Washington Post.

With the possible exceptions of Sugar Ray Leonard and Oliver Carr, nobody in Washington gets the coverage they think they deserve. But it's not just the *amount* of coverage that's the problem. It's more the placement and tone.

A daily newspaper still sketches the landscape of the local psyche, defines what matters and what doesn't. A newcomer to Boston, Chicago, New York, or other cities grasps very quickly from the local papers that city hall is front page. It counts.

Not so in D.C. Here, local coverage is tossed into the cognitive cuisinart of the Metro pages. Many weeks, the mayor and the council chairman combined seem to get fewer column inches than townhouses near the beltway and new office space downtown. The Message: D.C. is distinctly backburner. People who have been here for several years still think Mayor Marion is a "she."

The District Weekly can be quite good on culture. But it doesn't get to suburbanites, which most people on the Hill happen to be. Besides, the special-section format puts the weekly into the same category as Style and Weekend. Really soft.

Let's grant that covering the District would not be easy for the most committed daily. D.C. is only one of seven political jurisdictions in Post country. There is not one local news; there are seven. Fewer Post readers live in the District than in the suburbs, and this suburban majority buys more townhouses, tape decks, and Holiday Spa memberships than do city dwellers. As the bottom line boys put it, the "demographics are out there."

And even if a Cavour of the metropolitan area were to come riding out of Hyattsville on a Moto-Guzzi, unify this balkanized region and establish the Capitol at 13th and E, it would still be a pale presence between the combined eminence of the Hill and 1600 Pennsylvania.

This doesn't explain, however, why it takes a budget fiasco, a slow news day, or an Oliver Carr building permit to get the District onto the front page. It doesn't explain the condescending, now-lets-yuk-at-the-locals tone of much coverage of the council and school board. It doesn't explain why the Post treats the Metro desk largely as a journalistic bush leagues in which ambitious young reporters prove they have enough of the Right Stuff to merit promotion to the national desk or even a foreign bureau.

The Post does have more dedicated local reporters, such as LaBarbara Bowman, Jack Eisen, and Milton Coleman before he went upstairs. It has columnists William Raspberry and Richard Cohen who take the District seriously. But for the most part, our local reporting tends towards the hydroponic, without memory or roots. It forages our streets and apartment buildings for pazowies that will catch an editor's eye. I am one who believes that Janet Cooke was not an aberration, but an overachiever. She knew exactly what her editors wanted, and gave it to them in spades.

The nadir, I think, is the collection of candidate profiles that appear in the Weekly in late October of election years. Written, it appears, by interns, from canned statements and press releases, these show the depth of insight and connection that one might expect in, say, a Nancy Reagan guide to ribs 'n wings carryouts.

Can the Post's coverage ever convey the dignity and importance that local self government here deserves?

Will Mick Jagger ever team up with Perry Como? Will Reggie Jackson ever be a place hitter?

The problem, I think, is deeper than demographics and the farm club mentality. It goes to the rhythm of the paper itself.

The Post tends to be television in print. Its instinct is for the zinger. Today a front-page crisis. Tomorrow another. Connection and continuity are for someone else to worry about.

This style may be suited for—indeed, it may precisely mirror—the stage-managed media politics of the nation's capitol. It is not suited for the slow processes of local self-government, which are as pedestrian and tedious as life generally is. Local coverage requires the patience to stay with a story while it unfolds. Reporters have to know they don't have to Jimmy their way into print.

This is a reason, I think, that the Star's local reporting frequently was better than the Post's. Its staid, workmanlike style made the Star more hospitable for the kinds of stories local reporters bring back from the District Building.

A paper can't do everything. What the Post does, it generally does well. Its episode flashes frequently hit much-deserving targets, to immense general benefit. But I think that on 15th Street, the District will always be a homely child from a previous marriage, accommodated but not really embraced.

It can be argued that the Post doesn't give D.C. politics much importance because not much of importance happens here. But papers don't just respond to importance. They create it. By treating D.C. as the bushes, the Post helps keep it so—in the eyes of those with ultimate say in its affairs, on Capitol Hill.

THE CASE FOR A TAX FREEZE

John Wilson

For years now the rapidly escalating value of residential real property in the District has caused real property tax assessments to increase at astounding rates *each year*. For example, assessments of single family residences in the District have increased 18-25% in each tax year since 1977:

Since assessments form the basis upon which the real property tax is applied, tax bills to residential real property owners have been going up even as tax rates have been going down. Thus when council-members vote for a tax rate decrease they create the illusion that tax bills will also be reduced. In reality, however, the yearly increases in assessments have been such that even with tax rate decreases residential real property owners are paying ever larger real property tax bills. Taxpayers, irate at this type of deceptive maneuvering, have the right to expect more from their elected officials than bland statements of the sort "Well, the council lowered the tax rate, but can't control assessments".

Uncontrolled assessment increases are driving many long-time District residents to sell their homes because they can no longer afford yearly real prop-

erty tax increases which often result in tax bills which exceed mortgage payments. This is a particularly onerous burden for people who may have purchased their homes 20 or 30 years ago and are now living on fixed incomes. The problem, however, is not limited to these individuals. Persons purchasing homes in the District today wonder how long they will be able to stay in them when assessments increase by more than 20% a year. If this trend continues will they be able to afford the tax on a home that doubles in value roughly every five years?

The current assessment practices in the District also penalize those property owners who attempt to properly maintain or up-grade their properties. Property which is in good condition or to which improvements have been made is assessed at a higher level, and thus pays more tax, than property which is allowed to deteriorate and fall into disrepair. I believe that it is time for decisive action to eliminate these unfair and counterproductive results of the District's real property assessment and tax system.

In an attempt to address these problems, I have introduced legislation under which all residential real property of five units or fewer would have their assessments frozen at the assessed value they had for tax year 1982 except that the tax year 1982 assessed value for owner-occupied property of five units or less will be reduced by \$9,000. Assessments for these properties would remain frozen until the property is transferred. When the property is transferred the assessment would be changed to an amount equal to the consideration for the transfer. This would then remain the assessment for the property until it is again transferred.

The value assigned to these properties for real property tax purposes would no longer be known as

their "assessment", but would, instead, be known as their "tax value". The term "tax value" is being substituted for "assessment" in order to make it clear that this new way of valuing residential real property is not intended to reflect the property's market value.

By creating this type of freeze on residential property tax values and only increasing the tax value when the property is transferred, current owners of residential real property will know exactly what the tax value of their property will be as long as they own it. Likewise, persons who purchase residential real property in the future will know, when they purchase the property, what its tax value will be as long as they own it.

By knowing what the tax value of their property will be for all the years they own it, residential real property owners will be better able to plan what their real property tax expenses will be and should not find themselves forced out of their homes by real property taxes that double or triple every few years. Under this system of assigning fixed tax values to residential real properties, the only way the real property tax on these properties can increase is if the Council and the Mayor increase the real property tax rates. This puts the burden for increased real property taxes squarely where it belongs—on the elected officials. This new system also makes the real property tax easier to understand and provides the taxpayer with one direct place to focus his efforts if he is dissatisfied with the tax—the officials whom he helped to elect.

The new system proposed in the "Real Property Tax Freeze and Reform Act of 1981", benefits the taxpayer and the District government in less direct ways. First, the real property tax will be easier and

John Wilson chairs the council committee on finance and revenue. His article outlines one of the more unusual tax proposals to come along in some time. A hearing on his measure is tentatively scheduled for December 10. Several questions to ask:

- Isn't this plan fundamentally inequitable?
- Shouldn't there be a regular increase in tax value based on inflation rates?
- Shouldn't the city recapture some of the capital gain on a property through a special transfer tax at time of sale?

less costly to administer. The Department of Finance and Revenue will not need as many assessors, since the fair market value of all residential real property will not have to be determined each year. This means that the assessor's workload will be reduced by nearly 52% since approximately 82,000 of the nearly 158,000 properties they currently assess would be covered by this freeze and would only have a new tax value assigned to them when they are transferred. Even when they are transferred, in most instances the consideration for the transfer (and thus the new tax value) could be determined by checking with the Recorder of Deeds.

Second, cost savings will be achieved by the Board of Equalization and Review. This Board is currently composed of 15 members, paid on a per diem basis, and hears appeals on assessments of all real property. Under the "Real Property Tax Freeze and Reform Act of 1981" the Board of Equalization and Review is abolished and replaced with a Real Property Tax Value Review Board. This new Board will only have 10 members since the number of appeals they hear each year should be greatly reduced given the new system of assigning tax values to residential real property. In the last appeal process (for tax year 1982) of the 2206 ap-

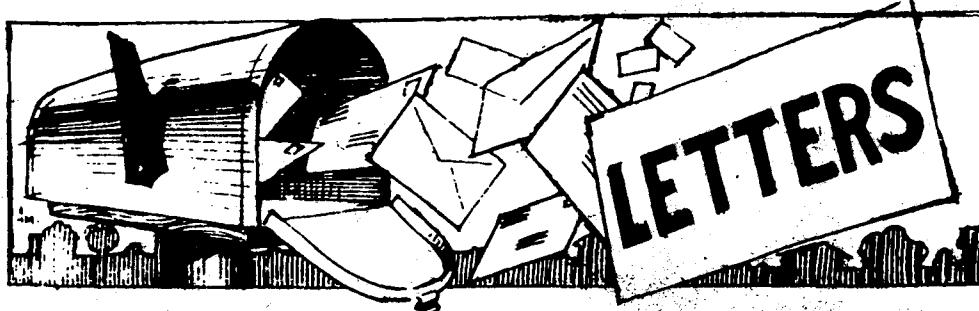
peals heard by the Board of Equalization and Review, 1372 were appeals involving residential real property. Virtually all these appeals should be eliminated under the next tax value assignment process. This will save District taxpayers money since the number of board members needed to handle appeals will be reduced by one-third and the number of hours spent by board member on appeals, and thus their per diem expenses, should also be reduced.

Third, District taxpayers' money will be saved by the elimination of both the homestead exemption and the tax deferral programs. The \$9,000 homestead exemption is built into the tax value and no further applications need be filed to obtain it. The tax deferral program was originally enacted in an effort to deal with assessment increases that placed unexpected and undue burdens on many taxpayers. Since, under the new system, tax values will be frozen until property is transferred, such tax increases should no longer occur and the tax deferral program is no longer necessary. By abolishing the tax deferral program the Department of Finance and Revenue will save all costs associated with administering this program.

Fourth, by instituting this new method of assigning tax values to residential real property which will change only when the property is transferred, it

should also be easier for the District government to estimate just how much revenue it will collect from the real property tax and have available to fund future year budgets. Because of the extended budget process involving the Congress, the Council usually begins considering a budget for a fiscal year about one year before that fiscal year begins. This has often meant that estimates of the amount of real property tax revenue available to fund that budget were not very precise because assessments had not been finally determined. With the tax value system these estimates should be able to be made with greater accuracy since the tax base will be subject to far fewer changes.

I believe that the freezing of tax values until residential property is transferred and the reform of the District's real property tax system will result in a more equitable and more easily understood tax system for the District. Residents will no longer be driven from their homes by escalating real property tax bills. Up-keep and improvement of existing residential housing stock will be encouraged. Budget planning will be improved. Costs savings will result. And perhaps most importantly, the onus for any tax increases will rest squarely where it belongs—on the Council and the Mayor.



In the recent battle over DC Law 4-69, it is a cruel irony that so much hatred and so many lies were generated by some, like the Moral Majority, who hide behind the Bible.

Those local leaders who followed Falwell so blindly failed to understand that by undermining the concept of home rule and sacrificing the rights of the District's gay citizens, they have created the opening of their own downfall. They have brought in the Trojan horse.

The gay community will meet this challenge with renewed determination. We are not, and we will not be second class citizens. Throughout history we have lived and worked and contributed to society behind a mask. That mask is finally being removed as we demand our full human rights. Despite the repression of the new right and the timidity of Congress, we will continue to fight for our rights and the rights of the residents of the District. We, too, have a dream.

TOM CHORLTON

President

Gertrude Stein Democratic Club

It's easy to see now why people avoid and even ignore the "legal paths" of permits and review commissions when they want to get something built. After going into a board meeting with an attitude of openness and compromise to have my building project "approved" (I already approved of it), all I received were jokes, humiliation and few constructive suggestions—along with a request to look into the matter further before bringing the project back to their attention (well, excuse me!).

The commission seems to have its priorities twisted around. The board will calmly sit back and approve behemoth structures which ruin existing architectural (not to mention social) conditions of neighborhoods and public avenues, yet raise a ruckus when small projects, not even visible to the public, are brought before them. Surely they can get their jollies elsewhere.

Beyond this, the commission seems to be caught up in an "above the clouds" mentality—not seriously thinking of human (How will a structure affect an area for residents and visitors?) or spatial concerns (Can a 13-story glass office building ever

really be a "quiet backdrop"?). They fool themselves by using first year architectural jargon as their criterion, and then wonder (or is it just the rest of us, who have to live in and around these abominations, who wonder) why that which is built (K Street, Pennsylvania Avenue) is no better than rejects from a freshman design studio.

One would think the situation was bad enough, having this commission rubber-stamp buildings which would be more consistent with designs in fascist cities built for Mussolini or Hitler (look at the extension to the Library of Congress). Worse yet, some preservation groups indirectly condone and even promote this balderdash. If a project is small and/or the client not influential, they demand (from the top of their almighty, self-appointed soap box) that any changes approved must be made to "look just like" the structures of their neighbors. Yet these same preservationists (?) pat themselves on the back when they get the height of a office structure lowered from 130 feet to 110 feet (Does

that make any difference *at all* to the three and four-story buildings at the foot of such an elephant?).

There is a secret to the mysterious process of commissions, preservation groups and their highly arbitrary decisions. It is that these review boards, along with charity balls and country clubs, are one of the prime bastions of the rich and well-born. From the time of their inception (the first board of architectural review was established in 1933), they have been the creation and plaything of those who feel it their duty to keep a hold on power and maintain the values of Civilization by giving us the benefit of their "good taste". Today, these commissions are controlled by architectural dilettantes and patricians who have no deep knowledge of changing needs or the pluralistic groups outside of their clique. Since their values (and lack of real legal power against big developers) make them pay homage to cash and clout, they have no place but to vent their frustrations on small projects. This probably leaves them with the satisfaction that they have done for urban America what Lord Kenneth Clark did for Sunday night television.

All in all, I think there is little or no need for such review commissions, and that if preservationists could get their priorities straightened out, and stopped being so deluded (they could just work directly with us), we could all have a better city in which to live.

JAMES SOCORRO

BULLETIN BOARD

Marcia Taylor (of Bright Morning Star) will be performing in concert her original folk/soft rock music. She will be at the Bethesda Community Cafe and Bookstore, 4949 Bethesda Avenue, Bethesda, Sunday, November 15, 1981, 7:30p.m. Tickets are \$3. Childcare available. Assistance for physically challenged by calling 529-6405.

The D.C. Teacher Center, the professional development arm of the Washington Teachers' Union, announces the start of a Dial-A-Teacher program.

Five telephones have been installed at the center, located on the third floor of the Goding Elementary School, 10th and F Streets, N.E. By dialing 724-8727, 28, 29, or 33 a student or his parent can get professional assistance from a public school teacher on a homework assignment or question about a content area problem. Of course answers

will not be provided to homework or classroom assignments but the caller will be given aid in how to get the correct answer.

The teachers who will be answering the phones have volunteered their services. Dial-A-Teacher will operate on Tuesday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Calling all retirees—teachers, principals, counselors, government and private industry workers... D.C. Public School students need your help in tutoring. Call 724-4209 for further details.

ITEMS to be included in the Bulletin Board should be typed double-spaced, and preferably should be one page or less. Submit by the fifteenth of the previous month to the DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009.

THE REGION

THE BELTWAY PERMAFROST CAPER

Eric Green



He was on again, the TV weatherman doing his 11 p.m. highs and lows. It was the last part of the report that always threw me.

"The AQU-Weather Forecast Predicts Cold Tonight. And Outside The Beltway It Will be Another Five to 10 Degrees Colder."

This road I had never crossed before. I was curious to know why a slab of concrete made a difference in degree.

The only way to clear things up was to start going in circles. So with one quick belt, I was on the way, a tent, instruments, and a grain of salt strapped on back. Truth—that was my goal, to discover what blows beyond the big city.

At 00:18 hours into the mission, I began to feel a distinct chill in the air. Good. This meant I was nearing the Beltway—that is if I wasn't already looped.

I continued to march up the pike, although at times it seemed the other way. But the directions were clear—they had told me to keep going until I was out of their sight.

At exactly 00:36 hours, I found it, a ton of mortar stretching into nothing. On top of that, a pile of cars—a few on top of the others. With the temperature expected to drop, I changed into a fashion suitable for fall.

Now to set up shop. By a billboard warning that prosecutors will be violated, I planted the first weather station, christening it "Channel 5."

At first, something felt dreadfully amiss. The thermometer read 98.6°. Even when I removed my clothes. Then I discovered the problem—you were supposed to hold the stick in your hand, not in your mouth.

I was ready to make the monumental leap to the far side of the road. But not everybody was cooperating. This time it was the weather—fog had closed the overpass. Correction. Make it the bypass. The state police were not permitting anyone through. And a wise move on their part, I'd say. It had become so bad you could barely see two feet in front of you.

Finally, at 00:64 hours, things cleared. I was

about to get my first surprise of the mission. For making it across, the trooper awarded me a citation. Yes, I was the first person in recorded history to be stopped for skipping over a federally funded freeway. The Man didn't have to do that.

That's not all I observed about life beyond the Beltway. I must mention the stars—they look brighter. Especially Pluto, which appears to circle Neptune around Uranus.

But I'm losing focus. The fact was that I had come to the Beltway for an education. Before long, I had constructed Channel 26, getting all the instruments in the way. For the next week, I criss-crossed the expressway, dodging cars and bullets.

Despite all these elaborate preparations, the project wasn't going exactly to plan. Readings were the same on both sides of the road. I know that couldn't be right. Maybe it was the equipment. Or

A poll taken by the Merit cigarette people found that thirty-eight percent of those polled at six area locations thought it would be "very likely" that they would accept an invitation to become passengers on the next space shuttle. Nationwide, only 25% of the respondents thought they would accept.

Area pollies were also considerably more satisfied with their weight than the national average. Forty-five percent said their weight was just right compared with 37% nationally.

Despite the current Redskin season, 20% of the respondents still disagreed with the statement "It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game."

The figure nationally was only 12%.

Crime, job opportunity and public education were far and away the issues of greatest local concern. And sixty-two percent of those polled said they favored video-taped replays to help sports officials make accurate calls and 53 percent said the US should not go to war as a last resort to protect its oil supply in the Middle East.

more likely the location. Probably I was standing at what they called a cross-roads. And I knew you weren't supposed to hang around places like that.

So I loaded my gear and headed down the trail, occasionally veering right when I couldn't merge left.

I understood now what the weatherman went through to make up a forecast. It was much harder than it looked. I must have walked forever until I found a place to try again. There, inside the Beltway, a man was sun-bathing in his swimsuit. Directly opposite, outside the Beltway, I saw a woman packed inside a fur coat. She was walking a chihuahua. To clinch the argument, the dog was shivering in a warm-up jacket, which had his high school letter emblazoned in blue.

It hardly seemed necessary to perform more research, what with the drastic difference in dress. But we men of science know better than to make rash assumptions.

My forecast for tonight called for it to be not only colder outside the Beltway, but *more* than five to 10 degrees colder. Sure, I know, it was dangerous. But I prefer the fast lane.

By the time I had reached the outer strip, I was perspiring from the weight on my back. Yes, cold is a funny thing, it can play tricks with your mind. That's why I was keeping a log—so I wouldn't have to use my head.

Even then, it was impossible to think. Yes, this infernal cold was the killer. How people out here could stand it was beyond me. And them too, probably. Maybe that explains what they were doing beyond the Beltway.

Courage Brother. Don't quit now. For if you don't have the supporting data, no one's going to believe the facts. It was time to start curving again, to measure the weather all around the Beltway—unless of course I went into a freeze.

I won't do into the final results. I'll save it for Phil Donahue. I will reveal, however, that I still believe in the weatherman. When he predicts it will be colder outside the Beltway, I'm not going to contradict him. Never would I do that. Because if nothing else, I've always wanted to live where it is warmer.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WAN

Remember, folks:

WHAT IS SUPERCAN?

Supercan is a mobile cart to replace your regular trash cans. It holds 85 gallons of trash and garbage - more than four regular garbage cans. The collection trucks have an added lifting device so the crew can dump the Supercan mechanically. Because of its added capacity, Supercan is collected once-a-week.

WHY IS SUPERCAN BETTER THAN THE PRESENT COLLECTION SYSTEM?

Supercan is cleaner, safer and more durable than regular garbage cans. Supercan eliminates dented cans with missing lids and plastic bags torn by animals. The appearance of the entire neighborhood improves because everyone is using Supercan. The automatic dumping device means that all your refuse goes into the collection truck, not onto streets or alleys. Refuse collection is quieter. Sanitation workers don't have to throw or bang cans to empty them. Their jobs are safer and cleaner too. That means less time lost to injury and illness so that you can count on regular collection.

HOW DO WE KNOW SUPERCAN WILL WORK?

Approximately 150 other communities (including Atlanta, Georgia; Memphis, Tennessee; and Fort Lauderdale, Florida) have been successful using similar systems for as long as eight years. Locally, Andrews and Bolling Air Force bases, Greenbelt and College Park, Maryland are using mobile cart collection systems. Most importantly, however, the District has run four Supercan test routes since July 1980. These tests have been overwhelmingly successful with a 93% positive response rate by the D.C. citizens currently using Supercan.

WILL ALL CITY HOUSEHOLDS NOW BE USING SUPERCAN?

No. Supercan is being implemented in the "outer-ring" of the city refuse collection service area. The city serves 98,000 households in buildings having three dwelling units and less. Fifty eight thousand of these households (60%) will use Supercan. The "outer ring" consists of all of wards 4, 7 and 8 and the outlying portions of Wards 3, 5 and 6.

WHY WON'T THE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE "INNER CORE" OF THE CITY USE SUPERCAN?

Supercans must be easily rolled to the point of collection and the collection truck. The city's inner core generally has the highest incidence of narrow, unpaved alleys, front points of collection, row houses and dense on-street parking. All of these factors contribute to making the use of Supercans in the center core physically difficult if not impossible.

HOW MUCH DOES SUPERCAN COST ME?

Nothing. The District of Columbia is supplying Supercan free of charge to each household.

HOW MUCH DOES SUPERCAN COST THE CITY?

\$35.97 each.

HOW CAN THE CITY AFFORD TO BUY THE SUPERCANS?

Supercans pay for themselves. By providing the capacity to go to once a week collection, the city will save approximately \$2 million annually due to decreased use of fuel, trucks, etc.

HOW MUCH WILL SUPERCAN HOLD?

Supercan holds 85 gallons or more than four regular cans. You may fill Supercan as full as you like, but the weight should not exceed 250 pounds.

WHAT MATERIALS CAN GO INTO SUPERCAN?

Do use Supercan for normal trash, garbage, lawn cuttings and small bulk items. Whether you pre-bag your refuse is up to you.

SUPERCAN SCHEDULE: 17,000 households in Ward 7 by December 18, 17,000 households in Ward 3 by January 1, 17,000 households in Ward 6 and 3700 in Ward 8.

Don't use Supercan for heavy materials, plaster or paints, solvents, gasoline, harmful to plastics.

HOW OFTEN IS SUPERCAN COLLECTED?

Supercans will be emptied once-a-week.

ISN'T ONCE-A-WEEK COLLECTION A HEALTH HAZARD?

Collection frequency is mainly a function of the size of the community. If it is properly containerized, as it will be, once-a-week collection is more than adequate. Many other jurisdictions, such as Georgia, have once a week collection.

WHERE DO I KEEP SUPERCAN?

You may store Supercan on your property.

WHERE IS THE POINT OF COLLECTION FOR SUPERCAN?

If you have front collections, there is no problem. Just roll Supercan to the same place every week. If you have alley collections, the Supercan should be immediately adjacent to your property.

WHEN SHOULD I PUT SUPERCAN OUT FOR COLLECTION?

Supercan should be rolled to your point of collection day. Supercans should be put out no later than 7:00 P.M.

HOW WILL THE SUPERCAN BE EMPTIED?

The collection crew (which will still be available) will roll the Supercan from your point of collection to the rear of the collection truck and unlatch the lid. The Supercan will be lifted by a mechanical device attached to the rear of the truck which will automatically tip the Supercan into the truck hopper and return it to your point of collection.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE ONCE-A-WEEK COLLECTION SCHEDULE?

All households will receive service once a week, although the collection day may change from time to time. Holiday collection schedule adjustments will be made.

WHAT IF I FORGET TO PUT SUPERCAN OUT FOR COLLECTION?

You must wait until the next regular collection day. You may put out the extra refuse in addition to your Supercan.

WHAT IF I HAVE MORE REFUSE THAN SUPERCAN CAN HOLD?

It is likely that all households will have occasional extra refuse on occasions. Simply put the extra refuse in bags on top of Supercan and it will hold.

CAN I GET A SECOND SUPERCAN?

If after six weeks of use you find that you need a second Supercan, call 727-4825 to determine if it is necessary. A city supervisor will also monitor households who may require second containers. For the storage of normal weekly refuse, a second Supercan will be provided free of charge.

ED TO KNOW ABOUT SUPERCANS

roll 'em, don't lift 'em!

should get them by November 17, 12,000 households in Ward 31 - also 5,000 households in Ward 5 and maybe 2600

such as rocks, sod, dirt, sand, oils, or hot charcoal which are

HAZARD?

tion of containerization. If refuse be in Supercan, once-a-week collection jurisdictions, including Atlanta,

ty where you wish.

SUPERCAN?

is no change in your point of collection you usually put your trash. Supercans should be placed in the alley

LECTION?

of collection by 6:00 A.M. on your returned to your storage location

consist of a driver and two loaders) of collection to the back of the can will be hooked on to one of two of the truck. The crew will pull a dump the Supercan's contents directly the ground. The crew will roll the collection.

LECTION SCHEDULE DURING HOLIDAY WEEKS?

ch week including those with holidays. Check the Washington Post for specific or call 727-4825.

MY COLLECTION DAY?

scheduled collection day although you can containers or bags.

CAN WILL HOLD?

exceed the capacity of Supercan refuse in another container or plastic will be collected.

refuse always exceeds Supercan's if another container is required. neighborhoods to identify those houses. When second containers are required a generation (except for yard debris), the city.

Households may also purchase second Supercans at cost when needed for lawn and yard debris or convenience.

HOW WILL BULKY AND METAL ITEMS BE COLLECTED IN THE SUPERCAN PROGRAM?

Same as always - by special request. Call 727-4825 to request removal of bulky items.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY OLD GARBAGE CANS?

If your cans are in poor condition and you wish to dispose of them, mark them clearly for removal and put them out for collection. If your cans are in good condition, you may want to save them for another use or for those occasions when you have more refuse than Supercan will hold. If you wish to donate them for the city to provide to low income households requiring containers, call 727-4825.

IS SUPERCAN MY PROPERTY OR THE CITY'S PROPERTY?

Supercan is provided to your household by the city exclusively for use in municipal refuse collection. It remains city property assigned to your address and if you should move, Supercan is to be returned to the city. Call 727-4825.

MAY I PAINT MY ADDRESS ON SUPERCAN.

Yes, although the serial number on the front has been recorded as assigned to your address and is designed for identification.

HOW DO I CLEAN SUPERCAN?

Supercan can be easily hosed out or rinsed with soap and water.

WHAT IF MY SUPERCAN IS DAMAGED OR STOLEN?

If damage occurs due to misuse by your household (follow the Do's and Don'ts on the lid), you are responsible and will be charged with the cost of a replacement Supercan.

If your Supercan is damaged by the city, the city will replace at no cost following a supervisor's investigation. Call 727-4825.

If Supercan is damaged through vandalism or stolen, the city will replace at no cost after a supervisor's and police investigation. Call 727-4825 and your local police precinct.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF - MY SUPERCAN WON'T FIT THROUGH THE GATE?

- I HAVE A LOT OF STEPS AND CANNOT ROLL SUPERCAN?
- I HAVE A STEEP SLOPE AND CANNOT ROLL SUPERCAN?
- SUPERCAN IS TOO BIG OR HEAVY FOR ME TO ROLL?
- I'M ELDERLY OR TOO INFIRM TO MOVE SUPERCAN?

Call 727-4825 to request a Supercan exemption or hardship service. You will be given an application and individual hardship service or exemptions will be granted when physical conditions do not allow the use of Supercan. Collection schedules will remain once-a-week throughout Supercan areas.

HOW LONG WILL MY SUPERCAN LAST?

Supercans are guaranteed by the manufacturer for five years. In some of the earliest cities to use them, they have now lasted over eight years.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE SUPERCANS SIMPLY WEAR OUT.

The city will replace them at no cost.

WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS THAT AREN'T ANSWERED HERE?

Call the Department of Environmental Services' Sanitation Information and Referral Center on 727-4825.

REGIONAL NOTES

Among the nation's ten largest metropolitan areas, Washington's 1979 labor force had the highest proportion of working women. Six out of every ten women were in the labor force in Washington compared to just over 5 out of every 10 for the other metropolitan areas.

These are among the findings of a new analysis of labor force data in the metropolitan area. The report, which examines labor force patterns of women between 1960 and 1979, was released by the Greater Washington Research Center.

Other findings of the report include:

- Between 1960 and 1979, the percentage of women in the metropolitan area who joined the labor force increased from 45 percent to 60 percent.
- In 1979 women accounted for 45 percent of the labor force in Washington compared to 42 percent in other metropolitan areas.
- Growth in the size of metropolitan Washington's female labor force during the past two decades occurred entirely in the suburbs, and 76 percent of the increase was among white women.
- While the percentage of both nonwhite women and white women in the labor force increased, the percentage of nonwhite women in the labor force remained consistently higher than that for white women.
- The suburban housewife stereotype is no longer valid: in 1979, 60 percent of suburban women were members of the labor force (a rise from less than 40 percent in 1960).
- In the District in 1979, white and nonwhite women had about the same labor force participation rates, but in the suburbs the rate for nonwhites was far higher than that for whites.
- Between 1960 and 1979, the increase in the female labor force in the metropolitan area was double the increase in the female population.

- The unemployment rate for both nonwhite and white women has been rising, but the rate for nonwhite women has remained almost double the rate for white women.
- The highest female labor force participation rate in 1979 was that of nonwhite women living in the suburbs: 71 percent. The lowest was that of white women living in the suburbs: 58 percent.
- Although they still dominate clerical jobs, women have made significant improvements in their overall occupational status.

The report is available from the Greater Washington Research Center, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 403, Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Retired Volunteer Service Corps of the University of Maryland volunteers to work as tutors, career counselors, academic advisors, lecturers, office assistants, program coordinators and technical assistants. Any retired person who can commit at least 3 hours a week per semester is eligible to be an RVSC volunteer. Volunteers should be willing to work in a university environment and should feel comfortable with young people. Info: Dr. Davis at 454-4767.

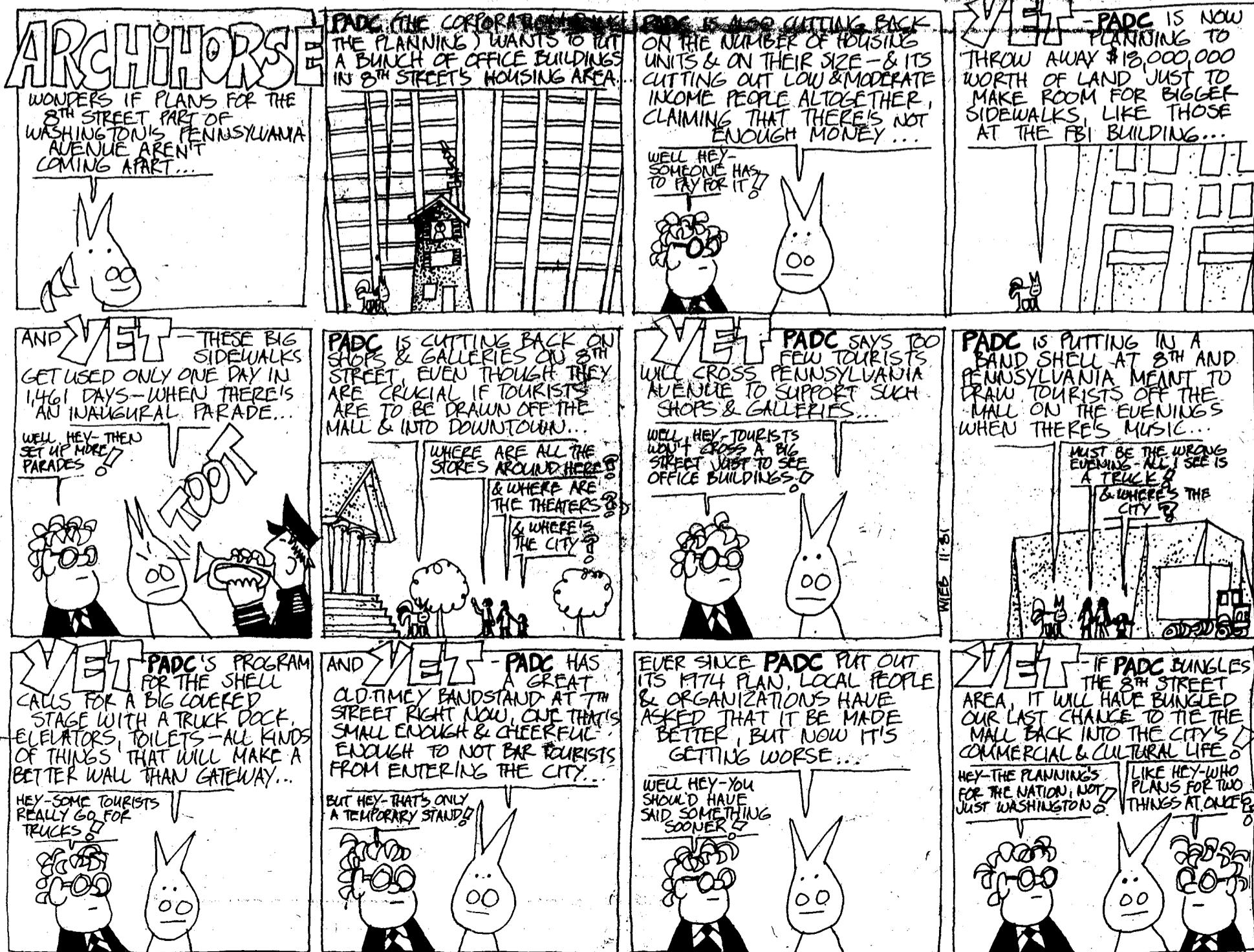
A POLL conducted by Rep. Frank Wolf in Virginia's 10th congressional district found that 69 percent indicated they support completion of the Metrorail system even if it means increased operating and construction costs for commuters and local taxpayers. About 20 percent answered no and 11 percent were undecided. For the past thirteen years, other area polls and referenda have shown support for Metro completion ranging from a low of 61 percent to a high of 78 percent.



Photo by June McAdams

PARK TETER has announced his candidacy for US Senator from Virginia -- running on a platform that stresses disarmament. In a campaign brochure, Teter says, "The risks of unilateral disarmament are real, but they are less than the risks of continuing futile disarmament negotiations. Realism is choosing the lesser risk."

Teter, has been a writer, teacher, editor and civil servant. He is currently writing "America First," a book on disarmament. He has worked for Congressional Quarterly and the Los Angeles-New Washington Post News Service. Says Teter: "The MX debate, the neutron bomb decision, the Israeli attack on an Iraqi reactor, the anti-nuclear movement in Europe and the Reagan defense budget are convincing more and more Americans that the arms race is out of control. Similar events will increase voters' anxieties before the 1982 election." Teter can be reached at Box 246, Leesburg, Va. 22075.



We'll try to do better

Over the past few weeks, I've taken a few pot shots at the way the Post, the League of Women Voters and the broadcast media handled the constitutional convention race. I'll have to admit, however, that the Gazette didn't do such a hot job, either. Our endorsements slighted some worthy candidates that we overlooked and we didn't do much to overcome the basic problem of all candidates: getting their views known to the public.

The Gazette has some good excuses -- such as the fact that the Post has about a 90 to one advantage over us in number of reporters, the problem of working with a monthly deadline etc. But we'd like to do better. So we're going to try an experiment: starting right now, the Gazette will offer any candidate for public office in DC free space to express their views each month. All copy should be typed single spaced, with a good dark ribbon, and should not exceed 7½ x 7½ inches in size. We will not edit, so remember that some voters grade for neatness and grammar. Remember as well that Gazette readers prefer thoughtful argument to rhetoric and bombast. Send your copy to the Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009 no later than the third Friday of the month.

Incidentally, in the future the Gazette will alter its deadlines to publish an issue closer to election day than has been traditionally the case. We hope these changes help.

SUPERCANS ARE COMING!

Faster than a Dempster Dumpster, taller than your standard trash can, able to pack 250 pounds of waste in a single bound...it's Supercan! In coming months the city will greatly expand its supercan program (although not in the inner core of DC). Forget about AWACs and tuition tax credits - here is something that will really change your life. To ease the culture shock, the Gazette, on the next two pages publishes some of the most common questions about supercans and the Department of Environmental Services's answers to them. If you still don't understand, please call them and not us.



THE DC BOOKSHELF



CITIFAX: Facts & figures about DC

CITIFAX: An invaluable collection of facts and figures about DC that you'll find nowhere else. Plus a listing of citywide and ward groups. Topics covered in maps and charts include poverty, industrial land use, per capita income, gross income by wards, office rental rates, school test scores 1975-1980, school enrollment, teachers salaries, comparison of school budget with suburban jurisdictions, private school enrollment by wards, tax revenue by source 1970-1980, tax revenues lost due to the federal presence, changes in the recreation budget, wards and neighborhood commissions, DC neighborhoods, city council committees, comparison of business taxes with other cities, land use in DC by type, recreation and leisure activity sites by ward, average house assessments by neighborhoods, comparison of housing sales prices with other metro areas, results of initiatives and referenda, presidential votes, ward results 1980, 1980 election results, population figures, Metro ridership by month, change in ridership to downtown, prior mode of Metro riders, causes of death. All this for only \$2.00

YESTERDAY'S WASHINGTON: A photographic history of our city that all lovers of DC will want to have. 20% off at \$7.95.

THIRTY-TWO PICTURE POST CARDS OF OLD WASHINGTON, DC. Ready to mail. Rare photos reproduced as post cards in sepia. A different way to stay in touch. \$2.75.

HEALING RESOURCES: A comprehensive guide to alternative therapy, preventative medicine and holistic health practices in the metropolitan area. Originally \$5.95. Reduced to \$3.

CAPTIVE CAPITAL: Sam Smith tells the story of non-federal Washington. "Not only well worth reading, but it is the best book we are likely to read on Washington," Bryce Nelson of the LA Times. "An excellent gift," Bill Raspberry in the Washington Post. "Must Reading," Afro-American. "A joy to read," Robert Cassidy in the Chicago Tribune.

NOTICE: The Gazette has secured the rights to "Captive Capital" and can now offer it to its readers 40% off the list price of \$10. For Gazette readers: \$6!

BOSS SHEPHERD AND THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS. The fascinating tale of DC's only true political boss and perhaps the most controversial figure in local history. \$3.

PUBLIC BANKING: A MODEL FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. A monograph on how to alter the city's banking system by William Batko of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. \$1.

TO: DC GAZETTE, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009

Please send the following items. I enclose check or money order

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OLD WASHINGTON, DC, IN EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS: 1846-1932. This is a truly fine collection of over 200 prints that provide an enduring record of this city. \$7.95.

SECRET CITY: Constance Green's history of black Washington. A highly readable trip through the city's black past. \$5.95

ANSWERS: Susan Meekin's widely praised guide to community resources in DC, where to go for help, how to deal with various problems etc. Truly useful. ~~\$4.95~~ \$3.00

JOHN WIEBENSON'S MAP OF WASHINGTON: Done in Wieb's wry and pointed style, this map was drawn for the Bicentennial and is now available for 40% off at \$1.50.

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ALLEY LIFE IN WASHINGTON: Family, Community, Religion and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970. By James Borchert. Borchert challenges conventional wisdom that the impact of the city led to the breakdown of migrants' social institutions. Borchert shows how Washington's alley dwellers adapted patterns that permitted continuity and survival in an often harsh environment. The male-headed nuclear family composed the fundamental unit in this urban subculture, but extended families, kinship networks, alley communities, and folk and religious traditions continued to provide coherence and to help alley dwellers cope with the rigors of everyday life. Forgoing outside assistance, these self-reliant people adjusted to their limited incomes and tiny quarters by using folk cures, remedies, and food sources, as well as by devising ingenious furniture. These crowded but isolated and homogeneous populations were able to shape close-knit communities, with social hierarchies which administered aid and comfort to the needy, but which also punished transgressors. This book is being sold by the Gazette at 20% off list price. \$14.80.

15 YEARS AGO

in the pages of the Gazette

The Emergency Recreation Council for Capitol East and the Capitol Hill Community Council have apparently made up without kissing. The ERC, at a meeting Oct. 27, appointed a special committee to review its election procedures. The action came in response to seven points of order raised by the Community Council, a delegate member of the ERC. Gregory New, who led the fight against the ERC (during which the Community Council several times threatened to withdraw from the organization), expressed satisfaction with the outcome. "That's the responsible action we wanted," he said. ERC cochairmen John Anthony and Thomas G. Smith also said they were pleased with the result of the meeting.

The session, held at Friendship House, frequently became heated. Before the audience of fifty delegates and guests, former chairman Michael Finkenstein gave an impassioned defense of his administration which he said was the subject of the Community Council's attack. He said the Council had accused him of being a "dictator" and that the charge "rankles." He described the Council's points of order as "ridiculous" and he claimed that the Community Council delegate to the ERC had twice voted for the election procedures the Council was now criticizing.

The motion to appoint a special committee was made, by cochairman Smith and included a provision that the committee, in its study, realize the necessity to keep "those nitpicking would-be parliamentarians" out of the organization.

The controversy has been growing for months. Finkenstein told the Gazette that the Community Council "threatened to quit when I became chairman and they wanted me to come to their meeting and defend myself and I told them, 'Look—that's your problem.'"

There appear to be several sources of friction between the two groups. One is the Council's displeasure with the informal nature of ERC proceedings. In its points of order, for example, the Council asked such questions as "Why does the ERC never elect the same officers by the same methods twice in a row?" At the meeting, delegate Jane Hardin defended the ERC's approach saying: "The ERC does detailed work. If they had to hold meetings every month they'd be like every other organization up here and never get anything done."

Capitol East shoppers have joined the protest against high food prices by boycotting area supermarkets.

Their action is part of a citywide effort to bring food prices down an average of 15% and to improve food quality and service.

Capitol East leaders of the boycott include Millie Buck of Friendship House and Linda Work.

Leaflets have been distributed and chain

stores picketed. The supermarkets maintain that their profit margin is very slim but the boycotters argue that if the stores did away with such gimmicks as trading stamps and special promotions, they would be able to lower prices.

The city has, however, appointed a study team, headed by Michael Stearn, which may propose some changes in the way the District handles trash. Stearn cited as one example the lack of packer trucks in Washington. "It is a sin that we don't have packers," he said. The present trucks have open tops, do not pack the trash, and require one man to receive the cans, while the packers permit all the trashmen to pick up cans and load and load them at street level.

But the chances of major changes in the District's operations look slim. As Stearn said: "It's the damnedest, slowest thing I've ever seen in my life."

Symbolic of the District's attitude towards the trash problem is the Sanitation Division's reaction to the matter of beer and whiskey bottles that often overflow Capitol East receptacles after a weekend. The cans are not emptied until the following Thursday. When a Gazette reporter asked a sanitation official about this, he was told that it was illegal to drink in public and since the receptacles are for pedestrian litter only, the bottles and beer cans shouldn't be there.

November 1966

In the closing moments of Congress, money for the acquisition of land for the Hine Junior High School expansion was knocked out of the city budget. The school is overcrowded, but the people who live in restored houses threatened by the expansion feel that the defeat of the plan was a great community victory. But we can only hope -- now that they've won this battle--that they will turn their energies towards protecting the interests of the 300 families to be evicted by the freeway.

An official of the Department of Recreation expressed much trepidation about what's going to happen to the portable splash pools over the winter. "We don't know whether they're going to mildew or rot or what," he said.

The National Park Service removes trash from its 1500 receptacles in the region up to three times a day and at least once a day. The city's Sanitation Division, meanwhile, maintains a leisurely pickup schedule of once a week for its 2000 receptacles. Robert E. Kloske, regional chief of the Park Service's division of maintenance, told the Gazette that the number of trash pickups per day is closely matched to the needs of individual areas.

He expressed surprise at the infrequency of the District's collection.

The Park Service's operations differ from the city's in other ways as well. It has purchased a large number of attractive 'tulip model' cans with wooden slats around the outside. "We actually got that model from England," said Kloske, "but if anything it is cheaper than the cast aluminum model, such as the Division of Sanitation has around the White House and downtown." And the Park Service receptacles are easier to service than the ones the District has.

The Near Northeast Subway Committee has been formed under the leadership of John Anthony to push for a change in the subway route planned for the eastern part of the city. The group wants the subway to run along H St. NE, down Benning Rd., to the parking lot on the north side of D. C. Stadium and across the Anacostia River to the Kenilworth Ave. interchange. Current plans, approved by Congress, have the tracks running through upper NE Southeast.

"We believe the Northeast route will be cheaper, shorter, and will serve the main points of interest in the area," Anthony said. Furthermore, he believes it would pay for itself.

He told the Gazette that the approved SE route had several drawbacks:

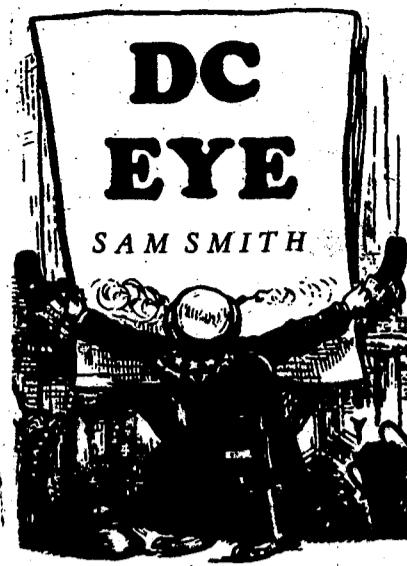
--It would primarily serve middle and upper income SE residents who do not need public transportation.

--It would not serve those living in the poorer sections of SE. These Capeasters would have to take a 20-25 minute bus ride to get to a subway stop.

--It would run through 1.5 miles of unpopulated land east of the stadium and include a stop at the stadium that would only be used during events there.

A few copies of this issue of the Gazette are still available. Send \$2 for each copy to the DC Gazette, 1739 Conn. Ave. NW, DC 20009.

Please tell us when you move



It didn't get much play in the press, perhaps because it conflicts with the popular vision of the school system, but this year -- for the fifth year in a row -- citywide test scores went up in almost every category. The one exception was sixth grade math which dropped from an average level of 6.5 (i.e. six years and five months) to 6.4.

The most dramatic climb was in ninth grade math which jumped from a level of seven years and two months to eight years and eight months. Citywide scores still lag behind the national norm, but the gap is closing.

Meanwhile Ward III test scores were dramatically above national norms with the exception of Wilson and Ellington High Schools and some tests at Oyster elementary school.

Third grade reading scores ranged from the fourth grade level at Oyster (a bilingual school) and Key to the eighth grade level at Mann and the seventh grade level at Janney and Stoddert.

Sixth grade reading ran from a level of sixth grade at Oyster to 11th grade level at Lafayette, Mann and Murch and a tenth grade level at Eaton, Hardy, Hearst, and Janney.

Third grade math scores ran from a high of seventh grade level at John Eaton to fourth grade at Hyde. Sixth grade math scores ran from a high of 11th grade at Mann to a low of 7th grade at Oyster.

In many of the schools sixth grade reference skills were practically at 12th grade levels as was science at Mann.

At Deale Jr. High, scores in the various skills ran one to two grades above national norms. The ninth grade at Wilson, however, fell significantly below national norms in science and social studies, although by 11th grade Wilson students were within a few months of national norms in all subjects. At the Ellington School for the arts, students were one grade or more below national norms in math, science and social studies.

At the School Without Walls, 11th graders scored at the 13.4 level in reading and at or near national norms in everything else except math.

One of the problems with the upcoming mayoral campaign is going to be listening to John Ray talk about site value taxation. This odd and potentially dangerous idea keeps cropping up (it's sort of the tuition tax credit proposal of the development world) and now Ray has introduced a bill for the establishment of a Site Value Taxation Study Commission.

The scheme involves taxing only the land value of property -- not buildings or improvements. It would, naturally, greatly increase the pressures for developing close-in communities like Capitol Hill, Dupont Circle and Adams Morgan. Watch this one. It's a corker.

After seemingly giving away most of the alleys in town to developers, Jerry Moore has introduced a bill that would rewrite the current laws governing street and alley closings. The most important part of

Moore's bill is that it would establish the right of the council to charge fair market value for land encompassed the closing when either the District or the federal government had title to the land. As things now stand, the council's right in this regard is unclear.

Charlene Jarvis has introduced legislation to subject any sale or lease of land owned by the Redevelopment Land Agency to review by the council. This is another better late than never bill, since the RLA has already parceled out a good deal of the land under its control and recently sold a southwest warehouse to the Kennedy family trust at \$30 a square foot when land less than a mile away was going in the commercial market for over \$600 a square foot. Earlier this year RLA agreed to a \$133 per square foot price for land at the corner of 12th & G NW, in an area where land was selling commercially for \$500-600 a square foot.

The RLA board reacted to Jarvis's initiative by threatening to resign if the bill were passed, which actually creates one more good argument for the legislation. Jarvis and other councilmembers should be encouraged to get control of the downtown wheeling and dealing. While there is always the chance a councilmember will sell out the city's interest, that body seems less likely to engage in the sort of sweetheart deals that have become the center city norm. Once the council puts the reigns on the RLA, it should consider taking over the zoning functions -- something that is frequently a power of local councils.

The McLean Gardens operation has gone to the BZA to get permission to construct a swimming pool and bathhouse.

Concerning the DC Court of Appeals decision ruling that city officials acted properly in denying citizens a referendum on the convention center issue, dissenting judge George Gallagher put it well, "If the people of this city think that just because their charter gives them the right to vote by initiative on legislation properly proposed by the citizenry, this right will be enforced by this court, they will now know better. In a touch of irony, the majority today votes for a voteless District of Columbia -- on this major question of public policy." Gallagher was joined in the dissent by Frank Nebeker, John Kern III and Stanley S. Harris (who, at this writing, is reportedly Regan's choice for next US Attorney here).

In proposing a redistricting plan that would move most of Georgetown to Ward Two, Arrington Dixon neatly carved out a tiny enclave so as to leave Polly Shackleton in Ward III. Said Dixon: "We were concerned about maintaining as much continuity in leadership as possible and causing as little disruption to the voters as we could." In the words of the late Senator Dirksen, "Ho, ho, ho, and, may I add, ha, ha, ha." Besides a John Wilson -- Polly Shackleton race in Ward Two would be a ball to watch.

Polly, of course, doesn't want to give up Georgetown. She'd prefer to give Dave Clarke the National Zoo and surrounding precincts. Gays in Ward II like the idea of

ROSES & THORNS



THORNS TO BEN FRANKLIN of the Times for writing a column length story headlined "Washington Seeks True home Rule" -- somehow managing to mention statehood only in the last paragraph.

ROSES TO DAVID CLARKE, whose investigation of census counts for his ward led to a recheck by the Census Bureau and the addition of another 1200 people to the tally of the ward.

ROSES TO KEVIN FLYNN, who has edited the Potomac Basin Reporter since 1974 and who has now left that post. The newsletter, known to some as "the brown thing," is the product of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. Although it is difficult to write in a lively fashion about such matters as sludge and bacteria counts, Flynn managed to do just that. As a result many care more about what happens to the Potomac River basin than they might have otherwise.

THORNS to the DC Office of Finance for its investigation of the propriety of three city council members voting to allow public officials to be delegates to the state constitutional convention and then running for the posts themselves. As David Clarke rightly pointed out, the office's position was "an absurdity." Ironically, the action follows a pattern of less than cooperative behavior by the Board of Elections on all matters relating to the statehood movement. We think rather than investigate the desire of some councilmembers to take part in the important effort to draft a state constitution (participation that was widely endorsed by those testifying before the council on the issue), the council might wish to look at the way the Board of Elections uses its power to achieve the ends of its members.

THORNS TO THE DC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION for selling eight properties in the Shaw area to developers that were part of a program designed to provide low income housing. According to a story in the Washington Post, the homes were renovated by DCDC under a program which required buyers to live in the multifamily dwelling and to rent the remaining apartments to low income persons for a twenty years period. But the conditions of sale waived the requirement that the dwelling be owner-occupied and reduced from twenty to five years the time during which the remaining apartments must be rented to low income persons. One of the purchasers was Luther Hodges Jr., chair of the mayor's Downtown Advisory Committee.



WILSON: Free drinks all over town.

adding Georgetown to their turf, Dave Clarke doesn't want to lose Adams-Morgan, Nadine Winter doesn't want to lose her part of trans-Anacostia, and John Wilson refuses to give up H Street. "We will man the battlements on H Street," he declared. "People want to know where John Wilson stands. Well, John stands right in the middle of H Street." John was more sanguine about picking up Georgetown. Wilson, who already has the city's most polyglot ward, said, "There won't be a place in town I can't drink for free."

The issue, of course, is not what is fair to the citizens but the effect of redistricting on each councilmember's political base. It's a lovely, insolvable issue with more rhubarbs to come. Sit back and enjoy it.

President Reagan, in one of his few right moves, has reaffirmed his support of the full \$337 million federal payment for the city for the current fiscal year.

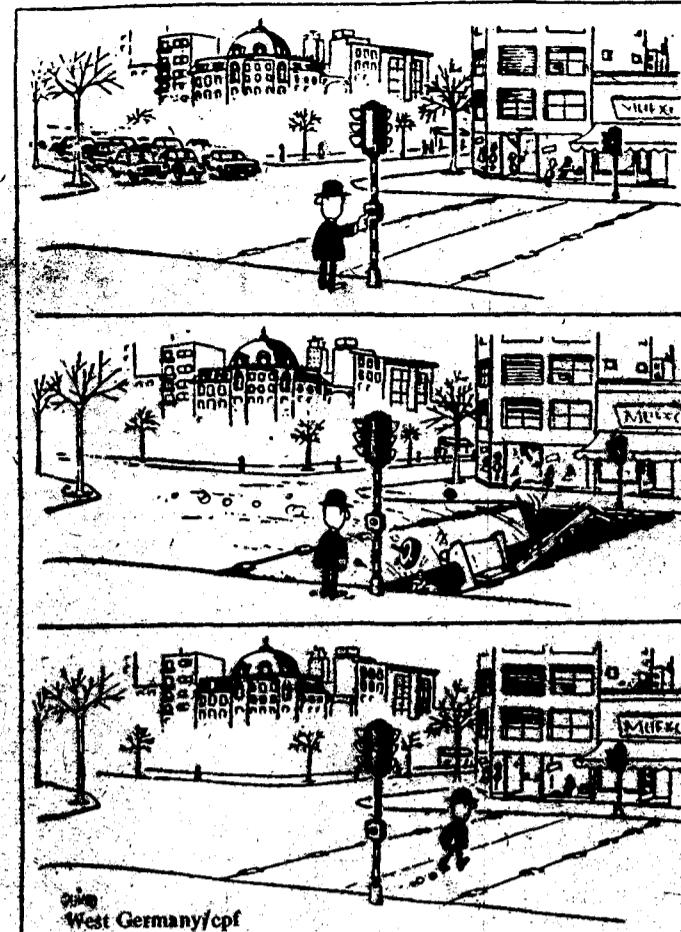
A hearing was scheduled last month on water and billing procedures. Among the proposals under consideration is Jerry Moore's bill that would cancel all debts owed by Citizens for Water and Sewer service prior to 1978. It's not too late to make a statement part of the official hearing record. Write to John Brown, Secretary to the Council of the District of Columbia, Room 1091, District Building, 14th & E NW, DC 20004.

Dave Clarke has introduced legislation that would legalize enclosed sidewalk cafes. Under Clarke's bill sidewalk cafe enclosures must be constructed of opaque materials and must be removed during warm weather. The measure may meet with some opposition from residents of neighborhoods where the proliferation of bars is already a concern.

The creation of red light districts for developers, also known as "enterprise zones," comes up before a city council hearing on November 19 at 10 am. The assumption behind this bill is that the city needs to do still more on behalf of the developers and so proposes special zones where building laws could be relaxed, taxes reduced and other DC regulations eliminated. If you think we've done enough to "encourage private sector initiatives" and that it's time to get the welfare fathers of the Board of Trade off the public dole, you might wish to testify. Call Evelyn Crawford at 724-8152 to get aboard.

There will be a hearing on the Historic Landmark Implementation Amendments Act of 1981, which contains provision for the transfer of development rights from a landmark area to some other poor, unsuspecting part of town. To get on the witness list, call Evelyn Crawford at 724-8152.

WRC'S Jim Vance treads the boards again November 13-14 and 20-21 -- this time in the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop performance of "Guys and Dolls." Jim will be Sky Masterson and will be joined by Ann Johnson, Steve Migdal and Dayle Berke. For ticket information call 547-6839.



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TOPICS

It was bad enough when Jerry Ford pardoned Nixon. It was bad enough when Ronald Reagan decided to demonstrate America's deep sorrow over the death of Sadat by dispatching to the funeral two former presidents and the country's most renowned repeat offender. But then last month the worst happened: the avenging angel of Watergate, the Washington Post itself, pronounced on its front page: "Nixon's Redemption." The article, by normally squeaky clean Haynes Johnson, was subheaded: "Mission in the Middle East Could be His Way Back From Elba."

There is no hope. Feminists marching against pornography have, I fear, got it all wrong. I can still keep my kids from wandering around 14th Street, but what can I do about such smut appearing unforewarned at my doorstep, unavoidably striking my children's eyes as they thumb through for the sports pages?

I do not gratuitously dump on the Incredible Sulk. Nor am I particularly enamored of mandatory sentencing, even for criminally-inclined residents of the White House. But having been denied the justice of judging Richard Nixon in some moderately responsible manner, the American public should, at the very least, be allowed to forget him.

Left to his own devices, Nixon would eventually have faded into the swamps of upper New Jersey and the back pages of high school history texts. The only way Nixon could ever bother us again would be if politicians or scribes conspired to resurrect him. This is precisely what seems to be happening.

Given the manner in which President Reagan has handled other matters, it is not surprising that we should find him coddling criminals or insulting two reasonably decent ex-presidents by casting them as co-equals of the godfather of Watergate. But for the Washington Post -- and especially Haynes Johnson for lord's sake -- to display such ethical insensitivity is hard to bear.

Mind you, Johnson did not suggest that Nixon should be redeemed, but the commentary was written in such a manner that those not aware of the full sweep of Nixon's destructive influence on American politics (such as the growing number of young people who started reading the front pages after Watergate), might be led to the conclusion that he should. Johnson contributed to this repulsive thought by referring not to Nixon's assault on the Constitution or the criminal violations of his administration, but to his "political and personal trauma." The road to hell is paved with such euphemisms.

Those concerned by the Lord's alleged distress with the course of American politics -- as revealed by the Moral Majority and others -- will be heartened to learn that it could be worse. On the other side of the Atlantic it already is. There a man known as the Yorkshire Ripper, who killed and mutilated 13 women he believed to be prostitutes, told a court that he had acted at the instigation of the "voice of God" who had sent him hundreds of messages over the years. We should all be thankful that the Lord, in matters American, has been content to stick to the legislative processes.

Just in time to help in the current campaign to unleash the country's intelligence agencies, red squads and similar forces of freedom, the media's favorite radicals -- the Weather Underground, surfaced again last month and in a suitably bloody fashion.

The mass media's fascination with this tiny group of hyperactive ex-grad students goes back a long way. Space that might otherwise have been devoted to groups that were seeking and achieving social change in a more significant (not to mention more placid) manner was endowed to the Weatherlings -- whose major contribution until the recent bank robbery (in which they had to receive technical assistance from more traditional criminal elements) was to blow some of themselves up due to shoddy bomb-handling. By international standards, the Weatherlings would be lucky to get an autograph from a halfway-accomplished Italian knee-capper.

But the media loved them, so much so that when the Ms. Boudin and Clark come to trial, a representative sample of the nation's newspaper editors should be placed in the dock as coconspirators (perhaps along with ~~the~~ ^{the} sleuths of the FBI who blew a 1970 case against Judith Clark by using burglaries, mail openings and illegal wiretaps).

It is worth noting, in view of the amount of attention the current case is attracting, that the John Birch Society reportedly is about the same size today as it was back in the time when the press had us all riled up about it. The big difference is that journalists have lost interest. So you can't necessarily tell the players even with a scorecard.

It would be comforting to ascribe the media's Weathermania to the normal perversions of the trade. But there is also a

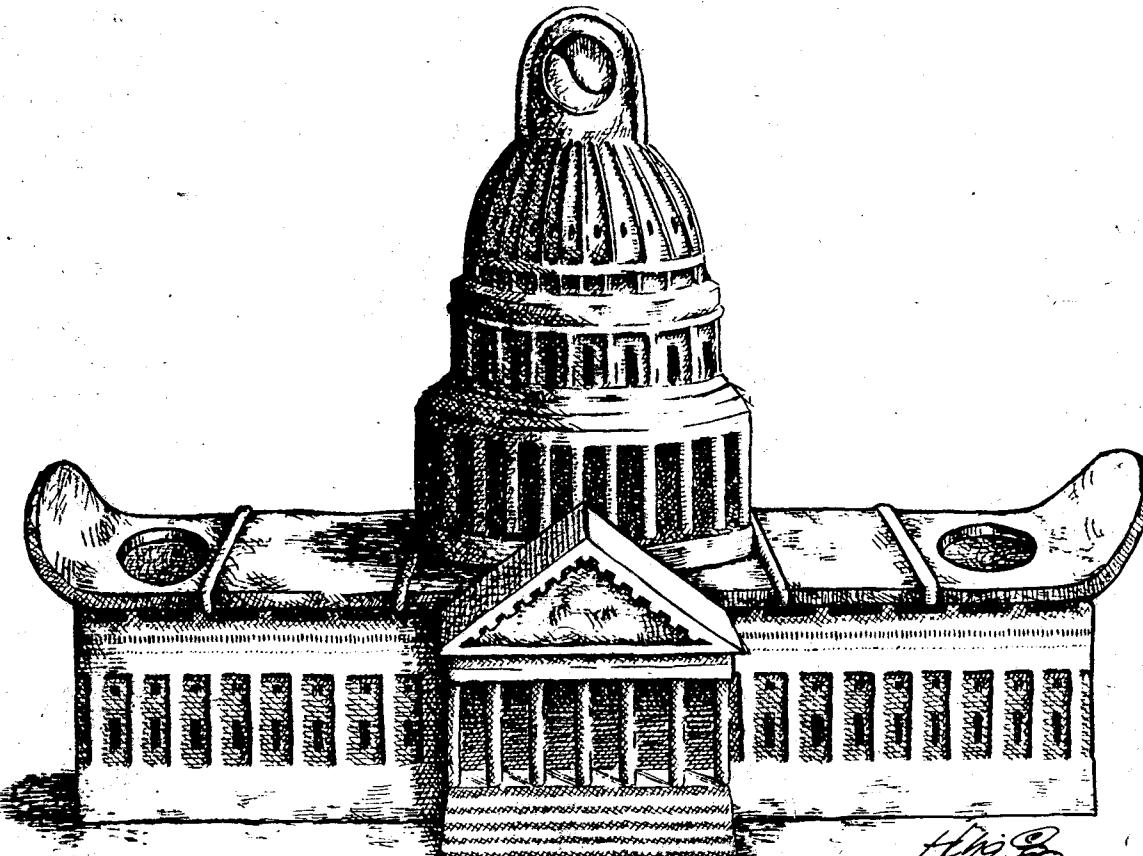
subliminal message involved which is simply this: if you try to change the system you too may end up robbing banks and killing cops. It's small wonder that so many can't tell the difference between an environmentalist and an egomaniacal political nut. Harken, for example, to the words of Kenneth Walton, director of the joint Federal-New York City Terrorism Task Force and one of those who has found a place in the sun thanks to the Weatherflop.

As faithfully reported on the front page of the New York Times, Walton told a news conference that while there were some links between the Weather Underground, the Black Liberation Army and the Black Panthers, "no connections had thus far been definitely established among any of the other radical groups. He added, however, that they appeared to share common purposes, including 'the creation of a socialist state' and 'an end of the United States Government as we know it.'" It was precisely this kind of talk that created what we once knew as the McCarthy era. Those with scars from those days will be particularly touched by Walton's use of the tentative denial, ~~no connections have been found but you better believe we're~~ ~~we're~~ ~~still looking~~

Notes from A WACKy debate:

- I kept having this recurring vision. The final vote approached and suddenly there was a call from the White House asking that the whole thing be delayed. It seems the Saudi had gotten wind of the AWAC's capabilities and wanted a better plane.

They'd discovered that the Israelis could jam its radar, it's only operational about a third of the time and has a distressing tendency to identify Porsches



truck along the autobahn as low-flying aircraft.

But only a few papers, including the Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal and Chicago Tribune, noted this fascinating sidelight that would have given the Saudis grounds for complaint to the Better Business Bureau. When you add the AWACS to such other international trade items as infant baby formula and pesticides, it would appear that a favorable trade balance for this country depends heavily on the exportation of lemons.

The thought that sending arms to anyone in the Middle East will aid the cause of peace seems a little dumb. It is conceivable that such arms might someday be used to defend the free world, but not before they had been thoroughly tested on other residents of the region first. Thus, the great undebated philosophical question was: does one mitigate stupidity by displaying it in an even-handed manner?

The debate did serve to revive one of the major unresolved questions of our times (and of our Posts and Suns and Tribunes and so forth): Is there a Jewish lobby?

The mere suggestion by any politician that there is one sends columnists streaking for their VDTs and trips the multiple copy switch on the Anti-Defamation League's Xerox machine.

I've never understood this phenomenon. If Jews don't have a lobby in Washington then they are the only group in America with more than a thousand members without one.

The mythology of the Jewish non-lobby creates some curious problems. Having denied themselves the open political arena, enthusiasts of Israel sometimes interpret political objections to their positions as indicating religious or ethnic intolerance as if by expressing anti-Thatcher thoughts one were considered anti-British and anti-American. And politicians naively believe that there is no such thing, sometimes get carried away as was the case with Jimmy Carter, whose suggestions for a milder approach to the Palestinians brought forth a reminder from Democratic National Committee chair Charles Mannett to the effect that the treasurer of the DNC certainly thought there was a Jewish lobby and would the ex-president kindly keep it in mind.

I have always thought that the non-existence of a Jewish lobby would be far more disturbing than its presence. Even, you might say, evidence of rank anti-semitism, since every other religion is openly and without embarrassment hawking its wares in the halls of Congress. Jerry Falwell is merely the most notorious example, but consider as well the absurd thought of a Catholic cardinal who wasn't involved in politics, or a Society of Friends that didn't lobby for peace, or a Mormon legislator indifferent to laws concerning alcohol or cigarettes.

This whole silly issue could be finally laid to rest if a group of avid fans of Israel would simply purchase a nice Capitol Hill townhouse, put up a dignified brass plaque reading "The Jewish Lobby" (or perhaps "ISPAC") and then proceed to act openly like other lobbyists -- throwing lavish luncheons at Maison Blanche, rating members of Congress on matters of interest to their constituency, taking columnists on junkets to vacation hideaways and waking up in a motel room in Fairfax without the slightest idea of how they got there. It would be a stunning blow for both reality and religious tolerance.

In the face of the Reagan budget cuts, I've only been able to find one way out: offer ROTC at day care centers, establish a Golden Age Militia comprised of social security recipients, mount mortars at all Title I schools and require food stamp beneficiaries to receive NRA marksmanship training. The quickest (and cheapest) way to bolster our defense establishment is for

everyone to join the defense establishment. But bleeding hearts are warned to act fast; other lobbies are getting the idea. I note in Metropolitan, a transit industry publication, the following from editor Jim Dunlop:

"In digesting all the rhetoric and rationale surrounding the Administration's budget cuts, with the sole exception of the defense budget, it occurs to us that the transit industry actually should be considered as the vital part of the defense industry that it really is. If the President is as concerned about defense as his administration indicates, then they certainly should be equally concerned about transit."

It's sort of old news but worth thinking about: on the day that President Reagan was shot, over fifty Americans were killed by handguns. It was just an average day.

If you're upset about high interest rates you might want to apply for a job as a member of the Federal Reserve Board. One of the seats becomes vacant in February. Interestingly, despite the fact that the Fed now consists nearly entirely of high-finance economists and bankers, the Federal Reserve Act states that the board should have a fair representation of business, farming and regional interests -- as well as

financial interests. There are no farmers or small business operators on the board.

Another sidelight to the interest rate scandal: when Mobil Oil lined up over \$5.5 billion in credit in its unsuccessful bid to take over Conoco, it verged on co-opting an amount of scarce credit equivalent to three times to the total outstanding commercial and farm production debt in North Dakota. The takeover winner, Dupont, will be paying \$750 million a year just to finance the loan it used to buy Conoco.

Finally, while we all now, I trust, fully understand the difference between an authoritarian and a totalitarian regime, there seems to be some residual confusion over the proper definition of ketchup. Responding to criticism of a Agriculture Department attempt to define ketchup as a vegetable for school lunch purposes, James Johnson, an aide to Secretary Block, explained, "I think it would be a mistake to say that ketchup per se was classified as a vegetable. *** Ketchup in combination with other things was classified as a vegetable." Asked to identify these other things, Johnson said, "French fries or hamburgers."

Now you know. So shut up and eat your ketchup and think of the starving supply-siders.

--SAM SMITH

AMERICAN JOURNAL

You remember investigative reporting. It was all the rage in the wake of Watergate, when mole-like reporters blithely in stupification at suddenly finding themselves in the public eye. Robert Redford

and Meryl Streep played Redford and Bernstein in a glossy movie, and enrolments in journalism schools soared. It looked, for a moment like the second golden age of muckraking had dawned. Well, it didn't. Today, investigative reporting is largely back in the closet of American media, just another fad in the commodity culture whose popularity has peaked. Most media executives tired of the time and expense it takes to launch first-rate investigative projects, shied away from stepping on the toes of the powerful and made sure that most of the muckraking that does get done focuses on small time crooks rather than the system that nourishes them. Thus, the show business-cum-muckraking success of "60 Minutes."

It gets a bit depressing when you scour the mass media for hardhitting, socially-conscious reporting. If, however, you peer into the nooks and crannies, the search can be rewarding. I was reminded of this recently, when I took in an all-day conference on investigative reporting that featured expose artist Jessica Mitford, media critic Ben Bagdikian and David Weir, director of the Center for Investigative Reporting, a non-profit journalistic venture based in Oakland.

The entire group was top-notch, but it was Weir, author (with Mark Shapiro) of a recent, groundbreaking book entitled *Circle of Poison*, who grabbed and held my attention with his anecdotes and analysis of the low-paying, back-breaking, decidedly unglamorous field of investigative reporting.

Circle of Poison uncovers the widespread use of lethal pesticides banned for sale in the U.S. but made here and exported to third world countries. Once abroad, the toxic chemicals are used on food which is then shipped back to the U.S. He and Shapiro wrote the book, Weir explained, "out of a sense of outrage that we would have one standard for ourselves and another for people overseas," and because he sees reporting as "a tool to make a more democratic society." Weir's work, which first appeared in *Mother Jones*, alerted foreign officials to the dangers of imported pesticides, and prompted legislation here--reforms that Weir views as limited but valuable.

"Reporters, by themselves, don't change things," Weir cautions. "But I believe that if you

give people information with which to make decisions, they will be better able to make sane ones." At the CIR, Weir went on, "we're trying to make reporting more preventive. Some journalists write just to write. We don't."

Weir and his colleagues were tipped to the pesticide story by a clipping from a Brazilian newspaper reporting the deaths of 13 children from a pesticide outlawed in the U.S. but still made here for export. When the reporters began their research, corporate spokespeople assured them that third world people were glad to have the pesticides to help them grow desperately-needed food.

"It turned out not to be true," Weir recalls. "We never found a country where more than 50 percent of pesticides were used for local food production. They're used to grow exotic, expensive exports. Multinationals are destroying the local basis for agriculture," Weir added, "in favor of large, plantation-style farms." This is leading some countries to depend on the U.S. for all but a few specialized crops. "If you're looking for the basis of imperialism in the late 20th century," concludes Weir, "look at food."

David Weir and his six full-time colleagues at the CIR will do about 25 stories this year. Most will be for alternative media outlets (although some will go to the big boys, such as ABC-TV's "20/20" where a co-founder of the CIR now works.) This is consistent with the historic role of alternative media, which broke such shattering stories as Upton Sinclair's exposure of the meat-packing industry, reports of civilian deaths in U.S. bombing raids on North Vietnam and news of the My Lai massacre.

Producing such stories anywhere will not be easy in the anxious, angry eighties, Weir believes, for a number of reasons. Among them are lawsuit-happy public figures, the Reagan administration's attack on the Freedom of Information Act, IRS pressure on non-profit foundations that fund dissident journalists and the dwindling number of national outlets for catalytic muckraking pieces.

It looks rough. And yet Weir, in a cautious way, is optimistic. "People like investigative reporting," he says, "they are not turned off to learning more. That accounts for a lot of popularity of '60 Minutes.' And a recent, major survey of cable-TV users showed that the second most desired item was investigative documentaries."

- DAVID ARMSTRONG

CHUCK STONE

This is how it went down.

The "Big S" (Uncle Sam, turkey) decided there would be no more vampin'.

If he was going to hip the bloods wearing olive green threads to what's happenin', he would have to get on down with them.

So, "Big S" wrote up this little booklet, "Pocket Guide to Germany" for 7,000 "ivies" who were about to split for the annual Reforger (Return of Forces to Germany) war games in West Germany. (Ivies are members of the 4th Infantry division at Fort Carson, Colo.)

The "Big S" knew if he wrote the pocket guide in the U.S. Army's "regulation one, subsection (a.), paragraph 10" stuffy style, ivies would have told him to stuff it.

To avoid that put down, he dug up this chick who could rap with blacks and whites on their street turf and she was commissioned to come on like she was a ghetto Shakespeare.

Although it's aimed at all 7,000 Reforger ivies, I have a deep suspicion the real targets are the 1,800 bloods (26 percent of the troops). Back in the States, the brother is constantly tearing his criminal butt and he do be taking them bad habits with him when he be going into the Army. (And talking just as badly, too, like that previous sentence.)

That's why the booklet's argot—sorry, bro, the rap—tries to reach the brother by occasionally getting funky. Appalachian whites must have wondered what in hell's coming off.

Even bros and pink-toes from the same tobacco road talk differently.

The "Pocket Guide to Germany" is an affirmative action rap for blacks. It will make any blood from North Philadelphia, Harlem or Chicago's

South Side feel like he's greasin' with spare ribs and greens.

But the booklet keeps flipflopping back and forth between straight prose and slang like it can't make up its mind.

On the one hand, the booklet will admonish:

"If you want to cash a personal check at these places, you'll have to sign a consent form. The form says that if your check 'bounces' for any reason—including, but not limited to insufficient funds—you give your permission for the amount of the dishonored check to be taken right away from your paycheck."

In the next breath, the booklet is groovin' with:

"The Soviets have beaten the snot out of the satellite nations" . . . "Now, as a guest in Germany, remember, you ain't got no diplomatic immunity and you ain't part of no conquering army."

Or—"Whoopie! Now's my chance to rape, burn, pillage and jaywalk all over Germany. WRONG! You ain't on your own block" . . . "you can see we ain't talking chump change" . . . "Now you nail happy hammerers, you ain't no wood-pecker" . . . "If you decide to 'pork out' in some German restaurant, BE COOL."

Then the booklet jumps right back to square street:

"There's two types of jurisdiction outlined by the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement), exclusive and concurrent. When only one set of rules is violated and only one country is interested in the suspect and the crime, it's called exclusive jurisdiction."

The booklet just can't make up its schizophrenic mind whether it wants to be hip or straight.

Also, by sprinkling "ain'ts" and "you're guys, all 7,000 of ya" every few paragraphs, the booklet might be guilty of contributing to the miseducation of soldiers.

There's a distinction between slang or hip talk

(which can be consistently grammatical) and black English which is just plain, no-talking, stupidity.

"They books be hard and ain't easy" is black English and bad English.

"If we are ever going to get it on, may I request that you cease rappin'" is slang, but grammatical.

Despite my carping, I realize the proof of the pudding is in the greasin'.

Apparently, this novel experiment paid off.

"We wrote the book in this style to better communicate with the troops," explained Sgt. Charles A. Gordon, public information officer at Fort Carson.

"It was a first time. Its purpose was designed to—ah—attract attention.

"It was well-received. The manuever damage for this Reforger will be less than any other. The misconduct and serious incidents were down and the troops were well-behaved."

No wonder. The book runs dead at the ivies with this bad-assed hype:

"When it comes to violent stuff: rape, homicide and things that have a bad effect (in the booklet, it was misspelled 'affect') . . . that's where SOFA plays a big part. It helps decide who get to confine, try and hang you . . . This agreement helps determined which government gets the turkey who runs foul of the law."

Simply put: if you f--- up, your a-- will swing—German or American style—or you could go to the slammer and stay there until your buns rust into bad health.

And believe me, bro, I don't be selling no wolf tickets.

[Philadelphia Daily News]

INNOCENT BYSTANDER: Art Hoppe

Crime Can Be Fun

President Reagan has come out strongly against those bleeding hearts who have contended for years that poverty is a major cause of crime.

"The truth is that today's criminals, for the most part," said Mr. Reagan, "are not desperate people seeking bread for their families . . . It's obvious that deprivation and want don't necessarily increase crime."

And he's absolutely right. That's why it has become so dangerous to wander alone through a city's wealthier neighborhood where packs of fur-clad matrons lurk behind the privet hedges, waiting to surround and bludgeon the unwary teen-ager with their Gucci purses—"just for kicks."

But what has caused our nation's rich to make our streets unsafe for honest citizens? For the answer to this, I obtained an exclusive interview with Wellington Mosler III, Yale '61, who, when it comes to mugging, is a legend in his own time.

It was Mosler, as you probably know, who set a record for others to shoot at when he mugged three winos, a Hare Krishna flower peddler and a 17-year-old youth on a Number 31 bus at a red light in broad daylight.

His take, to be sure, was somewhat meager: \$1.49 in cash, six wilted carnations and a portable stereo. But when I asked about this, he replied with offended dignity:

"I am not in crime for the money."

Mosler's story is typical of his class. He was raised in the WASP ghetto of Palm Beach, where unemployment runs as high as 82.3 percent and most families depend on government handouts, such as commodity subsidies, tax credits and depletion allowances, to make ends meet.

Like most ghetto kids, Mosler turned to sports at an early age to relieve the tedium of his idle and dissolute life. He showed some promise as a golfer, squash player and racing driver. And he even envisioned a career as an amateur polo player until he

was rejected by the Tallahassee Country Club B team and realized he would "never make the majors."

It was duck hunting that led him into crime. "After getting up at 4 a.m. for two months," he said, "I realized I was, at heart, a night person."

As a beginner, he started out waylaying fifth graders for their lunch money, then became an intermediate purse snatcher and finally, after only a few lessons, graduated to expert nighttime mugging.

"I enjoy the exercise, the fresh air and the meaningful relationships that mugging provides," he said.

Asked what he thought of those few desperate muggers who are merely seeking bread for their families, Mosler grimaced. "It's money grubbing professionals like them," he said, "who give crime a bad name."

So it's obvious that Mr. Reagan is not going to make our streets safe until he takes the rich off welfare, gets the overprivileged kids out of the ghettos and finds them worthwhile jobs so they won't have the time or energy to prey on us honest citizens.

That will show those bleeding hearts a thing or two.

Mr. Reagan's Goof

In his otherwise superb speech on the economy, Mr. Reagan referred to the "independence and pride" of 19th century American visitors to Europe.

"One such tourist," he told his nationwide television audience, "an elderly, small-town gentleman and his wife, were listening to a tour guide go on about the wonders of Mount Etna. He spoke of the great heat it generated, the boiling lava, etc. Finally, the old boy turned to his wife and

said, 'We got a volunteer fire department at home. Put that thing out in 15 minutes.'"

It is most unfortunate that Mr. Reagan chose that particular incident to illustrate American virtue. Involved, history tells us, were Silas Cobb of Eames, Iowa, and his wife, Vernelia.

In Eames, Cobb was a pillar of the community and vice president of the Grange. But once Mrs. Cobb had dragged him out of the continental limits of the United States, he underwent a strange transmogrification. Partly to compensate for his insecurity, partly to get even with Mrs. Cobb and partly to celebrate his new freedom from his peer group, he turned to loud ties, loud talk, loud complaints and drink.

Indeed, on that unhappy afternoon of August 23, 1871, on the slopes of Mount Etna, Si Cobb was, as Mrs. Cobb later testified, "swacked to the eyeballs."

Their guide was one Pietro Patri, heretofore an honest, polite, considerate gentleman as were all Italian tour guides in those days. At first, Patri was puzzled by Cobb's remark, never having heard its likes before. Then, as he realized it was merely a crude insult leveled at an Italian national treasure, he became incensed.

"It was only a clever little joke," apologized an embarrassed Mrs. Cobb.

"Ah, the signor is clever," said Patri, his eyes narrowing as he drew a canvas from under his coat. "Then perhaps he would care to purchase this Mona Lisa for a mere 2000 lire?"

"How much is that in real money?" shouted Cobb, thereby coining an American phrase that was to be handed down for generations. "And how do I know it's the genuine goods?" he shouted even more loudly to make sure this foreigner understood his English.

But Patri was equal to the challenge. "Look, signor," he said triumphantly, "the paint is still wet."

From Mt. Etna, Cobb went on to Venice ("The Rainbow Girls back home could mop up this mess in an hour"); Athens ("You lazy Greeks ought to let our firehouse gang back home patch up these ruins"); and Paris ("We sure wouldn't let no snails get into our garlic butter back home.")

Three months later, the Cobbs arrived back home with not one, but six Mona Lisas, the un-

damaged original of the Venus de Milo, a Japanese edition of the Gutenberg Bible, and a deed to the Pont de Neuf.

This set a pattern for American-European relations that lasted for a century and resulted in myriads of recriminations, hundreds of diplomatic incidents and two world wars.

It is only in recent years, with Americans too poor to travel to Europe, that relations between the two continents have begun to mend. Why Mr. Reagan chose to rake up old animosities at this time is a puzzle.

In fact, I have put just that question to several hundred people. "Why," I asked, "did our president go on national television to tell a story about a man who said his volunteer fire department could put out an Italian volcano?"

No one knows.

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